



Entrant company name: **Tim Reid Media**

Entry title: **Tim Reid Media - Chinook Justice Campaign**

Category: **Social Purpose Campaign**

Social Purpose Campaign

Agency: Tim Reid Media Ltd

Pro-Bono Client: Chinook Justice Campaign

1. Brief, Objectives and Budget

The pro-bono PR campaign for the Chinook crash families demonstrates the power of ethical, strategic public relations to deliver meaningful societal impact.

For more than three decades, the families of the 29 service personnel killed in the RAF Chinook crash on the Mull of Kintyre in 1994 have fought for answers about the circumstances surrounding the disaster.

Papers are sealed for 100 years and after the pilots were cleared in 2011 following a long campaign, public perception was that the case was closed.

In 2024, on the 30th anniversary of the crash, a pro-bono legal team launched a new effort to secure a public inquiry. After a year without progress, the campaign had stalled and the families sought professional communications support.

In May 2025, the families approached Tim Reid Media. The one-person consultancy undertook the campaign entirely pro bono, contributing 450+ hours of strategic media relations, communications planning and media training.

The challenge was formidable: responsibly reopen national debate around a highly complex military tragedy while protecting families who had already endured decades of disappointment and emotional strain.

The campaign objectives were to:

- Reframe the disaster as an unresolved public accountability issue
- Restore visibility and dignity to families who had been marginalised for decades
- Enable previously unheard voices to participate safely in national debate

- Generate sustained media scrutiny capable of driving political engagement
- Mobilise public support for transparency and justice

The campaign operated with zero financial budget.

2. The Idea, Research and Planning

Research identified two major barriers to progress.

First, the crash was widely perceived as a historic event that had already been investigated and resolved.

Second, the technical complexity of aviation safety evidence made the issue difficult for journalists and the public to understand.

The central strategic insight was that social justice campaigns succeed when human impact becomes visible.

Tim Reid Media therefore reframed the story around the “Chinook Children” — the 47 sons and daughters who lost fathers in the crash and who had grown up without answers.

This transformed the narrative from a technical aviation dispute into a powerful human story about accountability, fairness and generational injustice.

Planning focused on three interconnected audiences:

Public opinion to build empathy and support

Media scrutiny to sustain national attention

Political stakeholders to convert attention into accountability

Campaign activity was carefully sequenced around key moments including the crash anniversary, Father’s Day, parliamentary developments and legal milestones.

Ethical communications practice was central. Families received media preparation and safeguarding to ensure participation remained empowering and respectful.

3. Strategy, Creativity and Innovation

Creativity in the campaign focused on emotional authenticity supported by evidence rather than traditional publicity tactics.

Key creative elements included:

The “350 Unanswered Questions” initiative

Complex aviation evidence was translated into clear accountability questions, allowing journalists and parliamentarians to engage with the issue more easily.

Father’s Day Campaign Film

Children who lost fathers in the crash spoke publicly for the first time. Their testimonies reframed public understanding of the disaster and highlighted the long-term human consequences.

Westminster Advocacy Moments

Events in Parliament, a petition delivery to Downing Street and a handwritten letter to the Ministry of Defence created powerful visual storytelling opportunities for broadcast media.

Rather than relying on stunts or paid promotion, the campaign used disciplined storytelling, timing and evidence to build credibility and sustained media engagement.

4. Delivery and Implementation of Tactics

The campaign ran from May to December 2025.

Despite operating without a budget, it achieved sustained national visibility through:

- broadcast interviews across BBC, ITV, Sky News, Channel 4 and GB News
- coverage across major UK national newspapers
- coordinated engagement with MPs and peers
- media training and support for family members
- digital mobilisation and a national petition campaign
- rapid-response communications challenging misleading official statements

Implementation required daily strategic judgement, balancing media momentum with the wellbeing of families participating in interviews and public events.

Despite the absence of funding, the campaign achieved the scale and impact typically associated with major agency programmes.

5. Measurement, Evaluation and Impact

The campaign delivered exceptional measurable outcomes.

Within six months it achieved:

- more than 4,500 pieces of earned media coverage
- coverage across every major UK national news organisation
- a national petition exceeding 52,000 signatures
- strong cross-party political support
- parliamentary questions and a Commons debate examining the case

Most significantly, sustained media scrutiny led directly to the first ministerial meeting granted to the families in 31 years, attended by three Defence Ministers.

This represented a major shift in institutional engagement and reopened examination of the circumstances surrounding the crash.

However, the campaign's impact extended far beyond media coverage or political engagement.

For the first time in three decades, families who had long felt ignored and marginalised were able to tell their stories publicly and safely. Many had never previously spoken to the media. Through careful preparation and support, they were able to share their experiences with confidence and dignity.

The campaign also helped reconnect families with public support. Tens of thousands of people signed the campaign petition and messages of solidarity poured in from across the UK, demonstrating widespread public empathy with their search for truth.

More broadly, the campaign reignited national debate about how the state treats bereaved military families and the importance of transparency and accountability in public institutions.

For the families themselves, the campaign restored hope that their decades-long search for answers may finally lead to justice.

Why This Campaign Should Win

It represents PR operating at its most meaningful.

Delivered entirely pro bono by a single independent practitioner, the campaign achieved national impact comparable to those created by major agencies.

Strategic communications helped transform private grief into constructive national dialogue, shifting the public conversation around institutional accountability and delivering measurable societal impact.

This campaign, aligned with a legal challenge by Howard Kennedy LLP and Doughty Street Chambers, demonstrates that strategic public relations can do more than shape reputation.