

HOW TO...ORGANISE A SPONSORED WALK OR RUN



Charity walks and runs are popular fundraising events. They can be run at any location, any time of year and is a great way to get your friends, families and work colleagues involved too. It's a great way to raise money and is also a visible fundraising method that will help publicise ShelterBox to the public.

What It's All About

By organising or taking part in an event that raises funds for ShelterBox, you will be directly providing aid for people affected by disasters all over the world. A great thing about ShelterBox is that every box bears its own unique number, which means that after your event you can find out exactly where the money you raised has gone via our website www.shelterbox.org.

On the other hand, fundraising isn't always all about raising money, it's just as important to raise awareness about ShelterBox and the work we do too. You can contact our Fundraising Team and they will be happy to provide you with promotional materials for your party. Whether you show a ShelterBox DVD or give out fliers, making people aware of the work we do is just as valuable.

Planning Your Charity Walk Or Run



The first step towards organising a successful charity walk or run is choosing a route. There are thousands of pre-planned walking routes throughout Britain, as well as unmarked walking territories in the countryside and along city streets. You can speak to a local walking or hiking club for suggestions.

The route you choose should be appropriate for your intended participants. For example, if you are planning to have many walkers or runners participating, you will need a wider path to accommodate them safely. Also, some paths are better suited for walking than running, so consider what type of event you'd like to hold before you choose your path.

Choosing your walking or running path early will also allow you to plan other aspects of the event. You will need volunteers to help on the day of the walk or run, and the length and difficulty of the course will dictate how much help is needed. You should also consider setting up an on-site medical tent and drinks stations along the course for the participants. When considering your route you will also need to take into consideration a suitable start and finish point with parking and toilet facilities and space for registration at the beginning and where family, friends and supporters can gather to cheer-in the participants at the end.

You will also need to decide if participants will pay an entry fee or just raise money through sponsorship, or both. By deciding this early on in the planning process you will be able to make better projections about the money you will raise from the event, plus accommodate for any necessary expenses.

Legalities Of A Charity Walk Or Run

There are several legalities to consider before confirming and publicising your charity walk or run. First, you should obtain permission to use your planned route on the day of the event. Speak to the local council and the land owner(s) for permission, and make sure your plan does not interfere with someone else's planned use of the land for that day.

Secondly, you will need to contact ShelterBox to inform us of your plans. You will need permission to use our name and logo for your event, but most importantly, we will be able to help you with publicity too.

Finally, you should obtain liability insurance for your event. Ideally, your insurance should cover any medical problems that occur during the event, as well as incidentals such as damage to land and property. Contact an insurance provider to discuss your event and the coverage they offer.

In addition to receiving insurance coverage for the charity walk or run, you should also notify local emergency services of your plans well in advance. Depending on the size of the event, they may provide assistance with issues like event traffic or on-site medical care.

It may go without saying, but if you are planning a road walk or run you will also need to speak to the council and police to coordinate road closures on the day of the event. To avoid disappointment, you should do this as early as possible!

Recruitment

Now that you have the route and date confirmed for your charity walk or run, it's time to get other people involved. How you do this depends on how big you want the event to be, but make sure you give yourself plenty of time and your participants plenty of notice. You will have a greater chance of success if you spread the word wider beyond close friends and family. The more people that know about your event, the more successful it's likely to be and the more money you're likely to raise. One of the most effective ways is to make eye-catching posters, fliers and signs advertising the event and distribute around your local area. Make sure they are striking, easy to read and include all the necessary details and contact information. You could also do a mail out to local companies and businesses via post or email with a flier and some registration forms. Even if they don't enter a team they may be interested in supporting your event in another capacity, such as prizes or volunteers.

Getting An Athlete Involved

Whether they take part in the walk/run itself or publicise the event on their website, having a local athlete or team involved will gain a lot of interest and funds for both your event and ShelterBox.

If you don't already know a famous athlete, phone up your local team's Public Relations department or the athlete's agent. Many teams have a specific person who deals with all enquiries of this type.

You may need to make a quick pitch for your cause, so be ready! Explain about ShelterBox and the way you'd like the athlete to help, making sure to emphasise how their involvement would help their standing in the community too. If you would like advice on this, contact our Communications team.

The Participants

The best thing about a charity walk is that anyone can take part. You may want to set a minimum age limit for entrants. If not, you will need to make sure that any participant under the age of 16 has parental consent and has a parent or guardian present at the event in case of emergencies. As you publicise your event, you should get written commitments from participants, ideally in the form of a registration form. This is essential, as you will need to monitor how many participants you will have on the day so that you can arrange sufficient support stations and volunteers.



Furthermore, keeping good records about your participants will be essential throughout the process. You can check in with them in the weeks leading up to the event to see if they need any help or fundraising tips and to confirm any final event details. You will also need to contact them when the event is finished to thank you for their support/attendance and to collect the fundraising donations they received from their sponsors.

Publicising Your Charity Walk or Run

When you have a sense of the number of participants, contact your local media to inform them of the event. You should prepare materials for them to use in their press coverage, including information about ShelterBox, the date and location of the event, the number of participants and any necessary contact information if people want to donate or sponsor a runner. It also helps if you have a unique story to tell, as they will be more likely to feature you. Be sure to give the media enough notice that they can cover the event – the more publicity you receive, the more funds you'll raise!

You may also wish to inform the media after your event, especially if it was a big success. Let them know how much was raised, who the winners were and why not include some photos.

If you want help with this you can contact our Communications team on 01326 569782 or publicity@shelterbox.org.

On The Day

If you a lot of participants have entered, you may want them to register prior to the off. In this case you will need a clearly identifiable registration area, manned by volunteers with the necessary paperwork. Allow plenty of time for this so that the event can start smoothly, and on time!

Make sure logistical items such as drinking stations, medical tents and route markers are set up and ready in advance for the start.

If you have a lot of volunteers for the event, have a team brief before participants and guests start to arrive. Make sure everyone is aware of what their role or responsibility is for the day and who the key contact is (and that they have the contact details).

Prize Giving

You will undoubtedly want to have a prize giving ceremony at the end of the day. This is the best opportunity to say a massive thank you to all the participants for their support and hard work. Make it fun and light hearted. After all, we want them all to come back and do it again next time! Once everyone has completed the course and results have been collated you can hold announce the winners. You may want to approach local companies and businesses to donate prizes. Besides 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, other prizes can be, but are by no means limited to:

- Fastest Team
- Fastest Woman
- Youngest participant
- Oldest participant
- Wooden Spoon
- Best fancy dress

But make sure everyone gets a medal or certificate just for entering and for supporting your event and ShelterBox.

Top Tips

Charity walks can be as small or as large as you like; although we may think of monumental events like the London Marathon when discussing charity walks and runs, in actuality there are thousands of smaller events across the country every year that also raise significant funds for charity.



As with most fundraising endeavours, planning is key to the success of a charity walk or run. Without some sort of plan it will only result in more stress for you and those around you. Work out a system for the different parts of event management that you need to cover and put some sensible deadlines in place so that you can manage things in small chunks rather than trying to do everything at once. Keep an event file so that everything is in one place, use the logic that if I was off sick could someone cover this event for me just by reading the file. Also, the more you can predict and organise the event beforehand, the more fun you'll have on the day of the event!

A few days before the event, telephone the venue (if you're using one), volunteers and any suppliers/services to confirm the booking and clarify the details. Plus, send a final email to your participants to confirm any logistical information and to give them the final morale boost before the big day.

If you feel overwhelmed, don't let these situations get the better of you. If you have friends, family or other volunteers available, ask for help.

Let ShelterBox know! We have an experienced and dedicated fundraising team here at HQ. We're just at the end of a phone or email if you need any advice or have any questions or queries. Contact 01326 569782 or fundraising@shelterbox.org

Most importantly, remember you're doing this for your charity and it's meant to be fun.