

Parent Support Group Action Pack



Funding and fundraising for parent support groups

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This guide is for information purposes only and is not intended to be a source of legal advice and must not be relied upon as such. Other organisations are listed for information purposes only and inclusion does not constitute endorsement by Contact.

Introduction

Before thinking about how you are going to fundraise decide which activities are essential to the sort of support you want to offer to families. Try to put these activities in order of priority. Is it more important to find new families and invite them to your meetings (you may need to print posters or send out information) or is renting a good venue for your meetings, setting up a website or holding an annual family day more crucial?

Only the group members have answers to these questions and it is important to act as a group rather than pursue several different individual courses of action. Some of the costs involved in the early activities of a group are:

- Producing posters and other publicity about your group.
- Renting a room for your meetings and providing tea, coffee etc.
- Producing a newsletter for all your families or members.
- Postage and 'phone bills: talking to new families, especially where a diagnosis has recently been given, is not something you want to rush and consequently your phone bill may increase.
- Inviting a speaker to your meetings. They may or may not expect a fee but you will at least need to offer to pay their travelling costs. Check this when you invite them.
- Extra help for those who could not otherwise join your meetings. You could perhaps help towards their transport or baby-sitting costs.

Pause for thought

Always consider the '*can it be obtained by other means?*' question as it could save you a lot of effort. It may be that, instead of raising extra money, you can make a saving or have something donated. Can some of the smaller costs be met from within the group? This could be through a regular charge for each meeting or small subscription for membership. When parents initially contact the group however, discussing membership or other costs is not appropriate.

Questions to consider before fundraising

Before discussing any form of funding, consider the following questions:

- WHY is the money needed?
- WHAT will happen if it isn't raised?
- HOW much is needed?
- WHEN is it needed by?
- CAN it be obtained by other means?
- WHO will raise the money?

You must be able to answer these questions yourselves because a potential supporter may ask you and, if you are unsure your group may not be given a donation or grant. The answers will also help you plan your fundraising events to match the time scale in which the money is required, the size of events needed and the amount of time your team of volunteers are able to give.

Many groups use their own resources, contacts and ideas to raise money. These can include car boot sales, raffles, social activities and sponsored events. But before you put a lot of energy and resources into fundraising, be clear about what you want the money for, so that fundraising does not become an end in itself, if that is not one of your group's main aims

Appropriate types of fundraising

There are countless ways of raising money and a quick 'brainstorming' session should come up with a long list. When you are deciding which fundraising ideas to use, remember that events should be:

- within your group's abilities. Make sure that it is a good use of your volunteers' time. For example, if an event takes five people five hours and raises £25, that is the equivalent of £1 per hour each. They might have preferred to spend the five hours at home and donated £5 each!
- within your group's aims. For example, should your group accept a donation from cigarette companies or companies trading in weapons?
- within the law. For example, you need a license from the local council if you want to hold a lottery or a street collection. Check the regulations. Remember that ignorance is no defence. Do not be tempted to think that you can bend the rules or break any laws because it is for a good cause.
- for the group. It is important not to mix up fundraising for a parents' group with any fundraising on behalf of individual children.
- FUN for the organisers and the public.

TOP TIP

Be careful not to get obsessed with fundraising to the extent that other activities are neglected.

Why do people give money to charity?

By looking at why people give money to your cause, you may be able to target your potential donors better and thus raise. People may give because:

- they believe in the cause
- they are having fun/socialising
- they want the goods or services offered
- they feel good having given
- they want others to think well of them
- they think it's the right thing to do
- they would feel guilty if they didn't
- they were pressured into it
- they were approached by a friend.

All too often, charities are given money by the same people time after time. It is often possible to offer something more. So, for example, people might come to an event because they enjoy themselves and not simply because they support your cause. Putting the 'fun' into your fundraising events is a good way of attracting new supporters.

TOP TIP

If your group is a registered charity, remember you must have your charity number on your website, emails, letters, newsletters and fundraising materials.

Organising fundraising activities

Rate your ideas for events on each of the following factors:

- How much will it raise?
- Is it appropriate to you?
- What is the likelihood of success?
- How cost effective is it?
- How easily can it be organised?
- Can it be repeated?
- IS IT FUN?

Most groups tend to plan activities a year in advance. Try to balance your fundraising programme with your volunteers' time, include large and small events and match events with your cash flow requirements.

Budgeting

Many group fundraising events tend to be small and/or tried and tested so there is a temptation not to bother with a budget, simply trusting to luck or past successes. This can lead to a reduction in potential profit or even a 'fund-lowering' event. By not producing a budget on paper and circulating it to the committee, you may be losing out on valuable ideas such as where potential savings could be made or how additional income could be generated. Preparing a budget also forces people to plan ahead and may act as a reminder of work to be done. There are six main rules to bear in mind when budgeting:

- Look at figures from past events if they are relevant but remember to add on an amount to cover rising costs.
- Be pessimistic about income – don't rely on people coming simply because the event is for a good cause.
- Be realistic about expenses and remember that many quotations do not include VAT.
- Include a 5% sum to cover unforeseen expenses in the budget.
- Be prepared to cancel the event if the net profit is too small compared with the effort involved in raising it.
- Make sure everyone knows the budget and keeps within it, for example, if someone saves £5 on prizes by obtaining donations it means £5 more profit NOT £5 extra to spend on publicity.

Example budget for a jumble sale

Expenditure	
Hire of hall	£25
Hire of tables	£10
Hire of van	£25
Petrol	£5
Advertising in newspaper	£15
Posters	£2
Leaflets	£10
Refreshments	£5
Raffle prizes	£10
Contingency	£5
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£112

Income	
Admission (200 people @ 20p)	£40
Refreshments (100 people @ 20p)	£20
Sales (10% more than last year)	£200
Raffle tickets (100 people @ 50p)	£50
TOTAL INCOME	£310
ESTIMATED NET PROFIT	£198

Planning an event

Try to avoid clashes with other events. Instead, consider having a stall at other groups' events; it's less work and not as risky as organising your own.

Hold regular planning meetings. Make sure that records are kept – draw up a job list and get written confirmation of bookings. Try to make contingency plans for wet weather and other eventualities.

Decide on an incentives policy too. For example, free admission for committee members, free cups of tea, the advance purchase of goods at jumble sales. If you discuss incentives in advance then there should be little cause for complaint on the day.

Make sure that people are put in charge of returning borrowed items, tidying up and notifying the press of the amount raised after an event. It is all too easy to forget and enthusiasm tends to wane after the event.

Make a point of thanking your helpers either on the day, in writing, at the next meeting or at a special social event later.

Can you tag onto someone else's event?

It could be that you don't want to organise your own event but would like to tag on to an existing event. Here are some more fundraising ideas to think about in your local community:

- Do you know somebody who has a place in a run, cycle or swimming challenge, for example, that could raise sponsorship for your group?
- Could you ask friends and family to hold a dinner party, garden party, barbeque or tea party and charge an entry fee?
- Fundraising can be seasonal. For example during the summer months you could get together donations and attend a couple of boot fairs. Or at Christmas you could request to be a beneficiary of your local radio station's Christmas appeal. Or have a stall at a Christmas Fair.
- Could you approach your local supermarket and request a permit to collect or bag pack?
- Is a member of your group a member of a local Church where you could request to be a beneficiary of the Church collection?

Publicising your event

Your organisation of an event may be superb but to make it a success it must be well publicised. See our guide to [How to spread the word about your group](#) for ideas about how to do this.

Local sources of funds for support groups

We recommend contacting your local community voluntary sector organization who should have information about local sources of funding and will hold details of large and small grant-making bodies, as well as resources available to small groups at a reasonable cost.

If you decide to apply for a grant, staff there may be able to help you prepare your application. Many voluntary bodies, such as Round Table, Rotary club, Inner Wheel Clubs, Young Farmers, student rag weeks, amateur drama groups and sports clubs local to you will be pleased to hear from you. You might be more successful if you offer to go along and talk about your group or run an information stall, before asking for funds.

Grants from the public sector

Grants from the public sector may include 'starter grants' from local and district councils and grants from trusts or private companies. This will depend on what sector of the community they wish to support. Ask your Council for Voluntary Service or the grants liaison officer (sometimes called voluntary organisation liaison officers) at your local council.

Grants from trusts

The techniques for applying for grants from trusts and companies are relatively similar:

- They will want to know all about your group: a clear explanation of your aims and objectives; how families are benefiting; how many families are linked together.
- Grants are easier to get for specific projects rather than on-going administration costs.
- Be clear about the difference between capital costs (for example a one-off grant to buy toys for the playgroup) and core revenue costs (for example, rent, telephone bills etc).
- Present your case effectively. A letter should only take up one page, but some supporting material such as a budget, accounts and an annual report can be included. The material should convey a sense of enthusiasm and excitement as well as being eye-catching. Include some background information on your organisation, the aims of the project, why they have been selected, what you require and when it is needed for.
- Keep records of everything you do.

- Nurture your contacts and don't be afraid to ask again even if you've been rejected. If you are successful, make sure they are thanked and send photographs, Christmas cards, press cuttings

Useful websites

For information and resources about funding and finance you can also try visiting:

- www.open4funding.info
 - www.turn2us.org.uk
 - www.fundingcentral.org.uk
 - www.fundsonline.org.uk
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Who to approach

Be selective in your targeting. Do not write to hundreds of trusts/companies, careful research is needed. Ask if any group member has personal contacts (relatives or friends) who are trustees of a trust or a manager of a company. Select targets which match the aims, geographical area and size of grant you need.

On average, trusts donate ten times the amount that companies do but companies also 'give' in many ways other than straight donations, particularly if they have a corporate social responsibility policy (see how in the list below). An application may stand more chance of success if it is directed as a request for help in one of these forms rather than just for cash:

- Sponsorship in return for publicity
- Seconding staff
- Advertising in group newsletters
- Joint promotions on products
- Gifts in kind such as old computers/office furniture or prizes for raffles
- Advice on finance, publicity
- Services such as offering spare places on training courses
- Contacts within the business world
- Employee support through payroll giving

Fundraising online

Crowdfunding

Groups of people getting together to fund projects is nothing new, but the internet means we have more opportunities to reach a wider audience. Crowd funding is described as,

“an alternative means of funding that allows individuals to take their ideas forward and make them a reality with the power of the crowd and change the world around them.”

There are many crowdfunding websites, including:

- [Crowdfunder](#)
- [Go Fund Me](#)
- [Kickstarter](#)
- [Indiegogo](#)

Crowdfunder also has resources, including a guide to help make your fundraising a success: www.crowdfunder.co.uk/blog/2014/04/seven-steps-crowdfunding-success/

For more information on how to run a successful crowdfunding campaign see: www.charitycomms.org.uk/articles/how-to-run-a-successful-crowdfunding-campaign?dm_i=3LK,2I5X5,DRQ892,94CHG,1

Social networks

[Neighbourly.com](#) is a new free social network to help small charities and community groups get help from businesses. Charities can tell their story and ask for help and companies can search for projects and 'pledge' money and volunteer hours. Another benefit for charities is that people in their area can see what's happening and show their support by joining the project.

For more information and to sign up visit www.neighbourly.com

Get your supporters to fundraise while they shop online

- [Give4Sure](#) is offering all charities a free app that makes automatic donations whenever you or your supporters shop online at leading stores like Sainsbury's, Amazon, John Lewis and many more. They want to ensure that smaller charities can take advantage of this new technology. Read more about what they have to offer: <http://hosted-p0.vresp.com/486759/3d3c259d36/ARCHIVE>

- [Easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) is another way to raise money for charities, schools, sports clubs, community groups, and other good causes just by shopping online.
www.easyfundraising.org.uk/
 - [Give as you Live](http://www.giveasyoulive.com/) is an award-winning fundraising platform that works with over 3,500+ leading online retailers. It will donate a percentage of every penny spent with them to your charity, without costing the charity or the shopper a penny extra.
www.giveasyoulive.com/
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Do I need to register as a charity?

Even if you are a small group and do not think of yourselves as a charity, you will still be charitable in the eyes of the law if you have charitable purposes. Registering with a charity commission simply turns an existing charity into a registered charity. Many trusts and businesses will only give money to registered charities. Most members of the public also think that registered charities are more credible than organisations which are not registered. So having a charity number can raise the public's confidence in your group, help you attract more volunteers and help with fundraising. Registered charities may also:

- get relief from some taxes including: income tax (where the income is derived from investments like property, shares, and securities and is applied for charitable purposes); capital gains tax, stamp duty and VAT concessions.
- become eligible for schemes such as Gift Aid and payroll giving (GAYE). Both of these schemes will enable your group to claim the tax on donations from tax payers. The value of such schemes varies depending on donors' income tax rates.

When must a group register with the Charity Commission?

If your group is in England and Wales, has a charitable purpose and an annual income of £5,000 or more, then you must register as a charity. There is no deadline for registering, though, and no financial penalty for not being registered. This means you can choose to register when it best fits in with your group's development and gives you the opportunity to get everything you need in place.

If your charity receives taxable income, you need to complete a tax return - either Self Assessment or Company Tax Return – depending on whether you're set up as a charitable trust or company.

If HMRC recognises your group as a charity for UK tax purposes, you may qualify for some tax exemptions and reliefs on income and profits.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-hmrc-charity-application-form-cha1

If your charity has business activities, the VAT rules will apply to you just as they do for any other business. You may, however, qualify for certain VAT reliefs and exemptions. Read more on the HMRC website at www.gov.uk/charities-and-tax

Registered Charities must be registered with HMRC to claim Gift Aid and other tax reliefs. For more information about the different legal structures for charities in the UK, please see our Group Action Pack guide [Legal structures](#).

Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme

Eligible charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs can claim Gift Aid style top-up payments on small cash donations of £20 or less . Please visit the HM Revenue and Customs for more information, www.gov.uk/claiming-a-top-up-payment-on-small-charitable-donations

HMRC Charities section has set up an outreach team, to help charities understand, benefit and claim reliefs through Gift Aid, the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme and the Employment Allowance. Contact the Charities helpline on **0300 123 1073** and ask for their request to be forwarded to the outreach team.