

# Guide to crowdfunding appeals

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## Why fundraise online?

Online giving is quick and easy to do, and the average online donation is double that of an offline donation.

## What is a crowdfunding appeal?



A time-limited (generally online) campaign that is very focused and has a sense of urgency. They focus on getting many small donations from lots of people rather than a few large ones. They typically use specialist platforms to manage and promote your campaign.

There are two basic forms of crowdfunding appeal:

“all-or-nothing”

You only keep the funds if you meet or exceed your fundraising target. If the goal isn't reached, all contributions are returned to donors. The benefit of this is that it creates urgency and encourages supporters to actively promote the campaign.

## “keep-what-you-raise”

You keep all the money raised regardless of whether the target is met, these are usually suitable when every bit of funding helps the project move forward. These have a lower risk as you receive donations even if the full target isn't reached.

Choosing between these options depends on your fundraising strategy and the urgency or flexibility of your project goals.

## Crowdfunding platforms

There are lots of different platforms that will manage your campaign. These will make it easier for potential supporters to find your campaign, as well as helping track progress and manage collecting donations. There is however a charge for this, which can include a set fee, plus a percentage of the amount raised. With so many different platforms available, you can shop around to find the one that suits you the best. Shopify, for example provides a guide to the top 10 Crowdfunding sites in the UK

**CrowdSpace Directory offers a comprehensive directory of crowdfunding platforms in the UK, allowing you to filter by investment type, industry focus, and years on the market.**

**Charity Digital has compiled a list of platforms, including a downloadable price comparison to aid in decision-making.**

## Why crowdfunding?

Crowdfunding raises 70% more in donations than fundraisers. They inspire confidence and are transparent about where donations are going. 27% of crowdfunder donors will go on to volunteer for the cause and 90% will promote the project.

## Fundraising target



Clearly explain the need, the work and the outcome of the donor's support. Set a target between £500 and £5,000 for a first appeal, to encourage lower-level donors and have a greater chance of success.

Setting up a crowdfunding campaign can be very quick to do; however, to do it well and be successful will take good planning and preparation and require your time. So although there will be additional publicity and awareness-raising benefits from your campaign, be aware of the cost/benefit of what you are planning to ensure you are making best use of your time and resources. When looking for a platform to use; things to consider include their level of fees, if they collect Gift Aid, do they focus on specific genre (art, tech, welfare, etc.) and reach.

Platform	Popularity & focus	Ease of use	Gift aid support	Funding model
JustGiving	Leading UK platform for charitable causes, raised over £4 billion since 2001.	User-friendly with simple campaign creation and sharing.	Yes – Supports Gift Aid automatically.	Keep-What-You-Raise
GoFundMe	Globally recognized platform for personal and charitable fundraising.	Intuitive setup, strong social sharing.	No – Must claim Gift Aid separately.	Keep-What-You-Raise
Crowdfunder UK	Popular for community projects and social enterprises in the UK.	Straightforward setup, resources for campaign success.	Yes – Supports Gift Aid for eligible charities.	All-or-Nothing & Keep-What-You-Raise options
Kickstarter	Renowned for creative projects; strong international presence.	Comprehensive guides and project support.	No – Primarily creative ventures.	All-or-Nothing
Indiegogo	Focuses on creative and entrepreneurial projects; global reach.	Flexible campaign tools and promotional features.	No – Users handle independently.	All-or-Nothing & Keep-What-You-Raise options
Crowdcube	Leading equity crowdfunding platform in the UK for business investments.	Detailed guidance for investment pitches.	Not applicable – Equity investments.	All-or-Nothing (Equity investment)

## Planning

Prepare staff, volunteers and trustees to be involved. Consider launching around an important date to maintain momentum and make a video summarising the appeal. Run the appeal for 3 weeks to 3 months to

keep a sense of urgency. Plan your campaign before you launch, include pre-notification of the campaign before it is launched to ensure it quickly gathers support; and also, how the campaign will be promoted on/offline, and when you will give updates on progress.

**Including videos and images can greatly improve the success of your campaign. Various studies have shown that including a video will raise 100% more than those without and good quality images can increase by 40%**

## Top tips

Whilst there are many things that can influence the success of your campaign, here are five of the key things to get right:

**Tell a Compelling Story** – Clearly communicate your cause, who it helps, and why it matters. Emotionally engaging content encourages donations.

**Set Realistic Goals and Rewards** – Choose an achievable target and attractive rewards to motivate donors at different contribution levels.

**Engage Regularly** – Regularly update supporters with progress, milestones, and stories to maintain momentum and involvement.

**Use Visuals** – Include high-quality photos and videos to boost engagement and create a strong emotional connection.

**Maximise Social Media Networks** – Use your existing social channels, reach out to local influencers, and encourage supporters to share widely.

Many crowdfunding platforms enable/ask you to give a reward to people contributing to the campaign. This can range from a simple thank you Email through to an invitation to a launch or gift such as a T shirt. Ensure any reward does not cost more than the donation.

Here are some examples of rewards a crowdfunding campaign might offer at different levels of support:

1. **£10 – Social Media Shoutout** – A personalised thank-you post or mention on your social media platforms acknowledging their support.
2. **£25 – Supporter Pack** – A branded thank-you card, sticker, or badge sent directly to the supporter to recognise their contribution.
3. **£50 – Exclusive Event Invitation** – Invitation to a special event, workshop, or behind-the-scenes tour related to your charity's work.
4. **£100+ – Featured Recognition** – The donor's name featured prominently on your website, newsletter, or annual report as a key supporter, plus all previous rewards.

## A strong start

Once a crowdfunder hits 30% of its target it is much more likely to succeed and encourages new donors. Get off the £0 mark quickly by adding offline donations (cash/grants) to the total. Say to close supporters 'no pressure at all but, if you did have it in mind to donate, then it would be really encouraging to new donors if together we could get the appeal off the £0 mark, ahead of our public launch next week'.

As your campaign progresses, provide updates to your supporters on how much is raised, what effect this money will have and what raising more money will do. You can also suggest ways in which they can help your campaign, such as by sharing it with their social networks.

## Social media tips



Social Media is a vital tool for running a successful crowdfunding campaign, Below are some simple tips to help you use it effectively

**Storytelling Posts** – Create and share short, compelling stories or videos about individuals who will benefit directly from the campaign.

**Countdown to Launch** – Build anticipation by posting daily countdown reminders to generate excitement and urgency.

**Engage Influencers** – Tag or reach out to local influencers or supporters to help amplify your message to a wider audience.

**Use Visuals** – Create appealing graphics, infographics, or short videos highlighting key campaign goals or achievements.

**Consistent Updates** – Regularly update supporters on your campaign's progress, sharing milestones and successes to maintain momentum.

**Interactive Content** – You can try using polls, Q&A, or even live sessions to interact with followers, boosting engagement and visibility.

**Shareable Hashtag** – Create a unique, easy-to-remember #hashtag to encourage sharing and tracking across social media platforms.

**Calls to Action** – Clearly and frequently include links and direct calls to action to donate, share, or support.

This is a really important step, but also one frequently missed!

## Meanwhile

Always thank donors, guide them to further involvement and ask them to post on their social media.

Crowdfunding can help secure grants, match funding or corporate sponsorship. Fundraiser pages from their own initiatives could also feed into your crowdfunding target.

## Future fundraising

Plan one or two campaigns a year depending on need, time, what is appropriate and your capacity to give it the necessary attention. This varies the fundraising 'ask', focuses efforts and allows for learning. Running too many campaigns risks supporters burn out, as well as using up a lot of ideas and energy within the organisation. If you are repeatedly launching campaigns, it may over run other messages that you are seeking to deliver and could even put off potential supporters.

## Crowdfunding campaign planning template

### 1. Campaign overview

- **Title:** Helping Hands Community Kitchen
- **Goal (£):** £5,000
- **Campaign Duration:** 1st May 2025 – 30th June 2025

### 2. Objective

- The funds will help establish a community kitchen providing free nutritious meals to vulnerable families and individuals experiencing food poverty in our community.

### 3. Target audience

- Local community residents, families, businesses, and socially conscious individuals.
- They will care because the campaign directly supports neighbours in need, enhancing community well-being and fostering social solidarity.

### 4. Platform selection

- JustGiving – due to its popularity in the UK, automatic Gift Aid support, and easy social sharing tools.

### 5. Rewards plan

- £10 | Personalised thank-you shout-out on social media
- £25 | Supporter badge and thank-you card
- £50 | Invitation to the Community Kitchen opening event
- £100+ | Donor's name featured on our community kitchen supporters' wall and online recognition

### 6. Campaign messaging

- Key message: "Together, let's nourish our community and fight food poverty."
- Emotional connection: Sharing personal stories of local families and individuals who will directly benefit from the campaign.

## 7. Marketing & promotion strategy

- Social Media Plan: Weekly updates, stories, videos on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
- Email Campaign: Fortnightly updates highlighting milestones and stories
- Local Press/Media Outreach: Press release and interviews with local newspapers and radio
- Influencer or Ambassador Involvement: Engage local influencers and community leaders to amplify messaging

## 8. Content Creation

- Video(s): Short videos highlighting stories from community members, the need, and potential impact
- Images: Photos of community engagement, meal distribution events, and testimonials
- Written updates: Weekly progress updates and stories on crowdfunding page and social media

## 9. Budget

- Marketing expenses: £400
- Production expenses (video/images): £500
- Platform fees: £200
- Miscellaneous: £150

## 10. Timeline & Milestones

- Pre-launch activities: Promotional content creation (April 2025)
- Campaign launch date: 1st May 2025
- Mid-campaign review: 30th May 2025
- Campaign end date: 30th June 2025
- Post-campaign follow-up: Early July 2025

## 11. Evaluation & follow-up

- How success will be measured: Achieving the £5,000 target, engagement metrics on social media, and attendance at the kitchen opening event.
- Plans to thank and engage donors post-campaign: Personalised thank-you messages, public acknowledgment on social media, and invitations to ongoing community events.