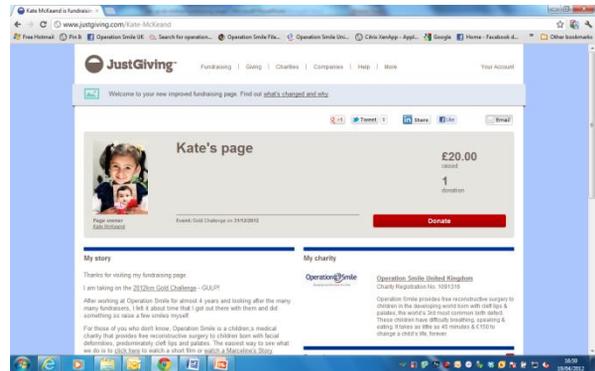


# Online fundraising Guide

Setting up an online fundraising page means that sponsorship raised this way is automatically credited to you and goes directly into Operation Smile UK's bank account, minimising the effort and administration making it easier for you, your sponsors and Operation Smile. It also allows us to automatically claim the gift aid on eligible donations increasing each donation by up to 25% with no cost to you or your sponsors!

We encourage you to use online fundraising pages as much as possible. Below are example pages:



Setting up your page could not be easier, simply visit: [www.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/operationsmile](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/operationsmile) or [www.justgiving.com/operationsmile](http://www.justgiving.com/operationsmile). Follow the instructions on the website and your page will be set up in minutes.

Once your page is up and running, you can start collecting sponsorship immediately. Most people do this by sending round an email to all their contacts containing a brief explanation about their motivation for fundraising, why they have chosen Operation Smile and a link to their sponsorship page.

Below are a few ideas to help you with your online fundraising page:

- 📢 **Get attention!** Pick a headline which will get people interested in what you are doing - remember tens of thousands of others are doing the same - what is special about you, your challenge and Operation Smile?
- 📢 **Use cliffhangers!** Once you've attracted attention, keep people interested by telling some of your story but keeping some in reserve. Encourage people to come back to you to find out more. Think of the cliffhangers at the end of your favourite film, book or soap.
- 📢 **Repeat yourself!** Researchers suggest that we have to hear most messages 4 times before we take them in. So don't be afraid to tell your story more than once - in fact tell it several times. Since you're talking and writing for several different audiences and different channels, this can mean a lot of repetition! But don't be shy - keep the same key messages but garnish them with new headlines, cliffhangers and reasons to get involved.
- 📢 **Keep people coming back** Treat your online fundraising page like a blog – add photos and updates whenever you can. Send email updates on your progress, it is very important to engage your supporters when you can - make sure they know where you are up to on your training and sponsorship, and what a potential donation will buy for Operation Smile. Such as £15 for antibiotics for 10 children's operations or £150 for a child's operation. People often intend to sponsor you but don't quite get round to it on the first request, from our experience it does work to keep reminding them.

- 🌐 **Make it personal** Tailor your emails and text messages asking for sponsorship and don't forget to send out a thank you message afterwards
- 🌐 **Start close to home** ask you closest (and most generous) friends and family to sponsor you first – you may find other people match their donations. Think laterally and make sure you have emailed all potential supporters: Sponsors come in many forms! Apart from contacting close friends, family and colleagues, why not contact overseas friends, former colleagues, college friends, fellow members of church, sports clubs, etc as well.
- 🌐 **Don't leave your fundraising at home** Promote your fundraising around work, school, gym, church, pub – use posters, flyers, message boards. Create a basic poster, a simple Word document will do or download one of ours, telling people about what you are doing and why, and ask any interested parties to sponsor you via your page. You would be surprised at the amount of people who receive sponsorship from complete strangers.
- 🌐 **Ask to be on your company's website** Ask your web-editor at work whether they would be prepared to add your site to the company/organisation's website or intranet. Workplaces enjoy promoting the public spirited efforts of their staff and you could get a lot of extra sponsorship.
- 🌐 **Spread the word using social media** Sites like Facebook and Twitter are free, easy to use and reach a large audience. Link your fundraising page with your Facebook page.
- 🌐 **Add a link to your fundraising page, to your email signature at work and/or at home** Adding your link to your signature helps ensure that all your contacts are made aware of your fundraising efforts, and you may even gain some unexpected sponsors! Don't forget to ask permission about your work signature.
- 🌐 **Advertise your web address via any publicity drives you initiate** If you are carrying out any publicity surrounding your participation in your fundraising event e.g. to local papers or radio stations, make sure you include your link on any information you produce for them.
- 🌐 **Use many different channels** Some people will want to hear all about what you are doing in person, some will prefer email - others want a phone call, or to see video clips of you on YouTube. Make sure you cater for all your supporters so that everyone is included - and has the chance to support you.
- 🌐 **Use some of our before and after pictures** Our pictures have a huge impact as you can immediately see the difference when a child has had an operation to repair their cleft!
- 🌐 **Send email updates on your progress** It is very important to engage your supporters when you can - make sure they know where you are up to on your training and sponsorship, and what a potential donation will buy for Operation Smile (you will find this information on Operation Smile's website).
- 🌐 **It's never too late** Keep asking people to sponsor you, even after you've finished your event
- 🌐 **Thank yous** most importantly don't forget to send a thank you message once someone has sponsored you!