



London Walkers

How to get more sponsorship income

The purpose of the **Unlock** London Walk is to generate income which **Unlock** uses to:

Unlock real life stories of urban people

Reveal Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

Release life changing skills and confidence

We offer **Unlock** London walkers an interesting experience and a great day out. In return we invite and trust them to collect sponsorship or raise donations to support **Unlock**'s work.

Getting people to sponsor you might seem challenging but it's really trendy and more popular than ever. You have friends, family and fellow Christians who will be happy to support you. Here is some guidance to help you make the most of this opportunity.

Most of these approaches rely on the use of the internet and social media. If you do not use those things; try to think of ways of getting the same results in more concrete, face to face, ways. Can you use your church's notice board, hand out flyers, throw a tea party to invite sponsorship, or say something to everyone on a Sunday?

1. Set yourself a Target

Decide how much you want to raise. Each **Unlock** London Walk costs **Unlock** around £15 per walker to put on, so you need to raise more than that to make a difference for **Unlock**. Choose an amount that will be a bit of a challenge but not beyond your reach. Then you can ask your supporters to help you reach your fundraising goal.

2. Make it personal; tell a story

Let your supporters know why **Unlock**'s work matters to you. Why do you care about it and the impact difference that it makes? You can find inspiring stories of the impacts of **Unlock**'s work here https://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/docstore/Unlock_short_stories_2022_gtgt_13.pdf How do these stories motivate you? The more personal you make your fundraising efforts and the more honest you can be about this, the more engaged people will be with what you are doing.

3. Use **Unlock**'s online giving platform

Having an online sponsorship page makes donating easy for your supporters, it enables you to secure sponsorship from people who are not geographically close by, and it eliminates any worry about the money going directly to the charity. People know they can trust it.

Unlock's giving platform, through 'Give as You Live Donate', is here <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com> and there is guidance on how to use it here https://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/docstore/How_to_collect_sponsorship_via_Give_as_You_Live_Donategtgt_351.pdf

Get your sponsorship page looking good from the start. Add photos (especially if you have done the walk before) and a description of what you are doing; or even better, a video (remember about keeping it personal!). Use all the features the fundraising page has, like adding updates or thanking donors after they've given.

4. Make it interesting

Creativity is your best friend when it comes to sponsorship fundraising. Although there are plenty of sponsored walks, there aren't any others that are quite like the **Unlock London walk**, with its circular

route, it is a mix of different kinds of places and the churches are open to visit along the way. Play up what is special and different about it to attract attention. Or, is there something special *you* can do as you walk to attract sponsorship? Instead of being sponsored per mile, could you get sponsored per step (if you have a pedometer), or per lamppost passed, or buses spotted, or songs sung as you walk? Could you wear something special, or collect something along the way? If there is a group of you walking from one church; is there something that you can do together to increase the amount that you raise? Make it fun!

5. Encourage Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer you can easily increase any donation by 25% by claiming gift aid. You don't pay for this 25%, the government does. And all you need to do is tick the gift aid box when you donate online! If someone has said they will donate remind them to gift aid it.

6. Be specific about where the donations are going

It's become common for people to use sponsorship as a way to fund a personal challenge or adventure. Although some of the money goes to charity, much of it does not and people generally are not keen on supporting this kind of fundraising.

Be really clear when asking for donations where the money is going. Make sure your sponsors know that **100% of donations go to Unlock**; this will be a big selling point.

7. Never advertise an empty sponsorship page

If you are setting up a fundraising page, get your nearest and dearest to give donations before advertising it to a wider audience. Or you can even contribute yourself and set up a few fake donations. People support things that look successful. An empty fundraising page is a bit of a deterrent. If other people have already sponsored it increases people's confidence about doing so themselves.

8. Ask, ask and ask again

Don't be afraid to do this. Most people need to see an ask or request 3-5 times before they act on it. It's important to remember this when reaching out for sponsorship.

You might feel like you are being too pushy or repetitive but most of us need to be reminded multiple times before responding. Lack of action is more often the result of not getting around to it, than of not intending to.

It's also worth noting that with social media, each time you post only a small percentage of your followers will see it. So even if you post 10 times, the chances of one of your followers seeing even half of those posts are slim.

However, whenever people say a clear 'no' then please respect their boundaries and don't keep bothering them!

9. Send a direct email out (or a traditional handwritten letter)

As soon as you have committed to raising sponsorship for **Unlock**, get in touch with all your appropriate contacts, asking them directly to support you and to follow your efforts on social media. Send another message out a week or so before the walk. And then a final one once you've completed it.

You can also ask if they would be willing to share your fundraising page on their social media platforms.

10. Tap into your socials

Keep adding updates and finding new content that you can share online. Do this on all the social media platforms you use.

Use your planning and preparation as a way to get people engaged with what you are doing. Share photos and stories of the good times (and the bad times too!) and always add a link with your sponsorship form.

11. Make a video

Videos are the most engaging way to capture people's attention. Make sure you keep it really short and, if you are not confident, ask a youngster to do it!

Video is a really powerful tool. You can use videos to update people and to keep them engaged with your preparation, as well as on the day. Get creative with your films as well – making them funny – will mean people are more likely to share it.

12. Make yourself the news

Try and get yourself in your church newsletter or even the local press, radio and TV. Get attention and support for your fundraising efforts.

Even if it doesn't generate many donations directly, sharing a local or church news article on your fundraising website or social media gives the challenge more weighting which will encourage donations from people who are checking your credibility online.

13. Keep plugging after the walk.

Once you've completed the walk your job is not complete. A huge chunk of donations come after the walk....some people want to see you will actually do it first! You might also get some early supporters donating for a second time. So be really active with asking for sponsorship the week after the walk.

14. Remember those thank yous

It's nice to send a personal message to everyone who donates and to post 'thank yous' on your social media pages as it's a great way to encourage people to get involved and get their slice of gratitude too! And you never know, it might encourage them to support you again next year!

Regardless of how your sponsorship efforts go, you should feel proud. Unlock relies heavily on income of this kind and even the small donations can really add up.

Thank you so much for supporting Unlock through the Unlock London Walk. Come back next year and please bring a friend!