



Sponsorship pack



Get on your bike and raise money for Life Cycle!

Introduction

Every year thousands of people take part in sponsored cycle rides to raise money for all kinds of good causes. We're asking you to raise money for cycling itself!

Life Cycle UK is a charity that helps people to take up cycling and to benefit from better health, affordable transport and an improved environment. We work with people of all ages and backgrounds, in particular with those who are least well-off. We provide free training to disadvantaged children, we teach bike maintenance skills to young people who have been excluded from school, we help adults with physical and mental health issues take up cycling in order to improve their health and well-being.

Unlike the big cycling organisations who receive millions of pounds of Government aid, Life Cycle is entirely dependent on grants and donations. Even small amounts can make a big difference.

So, a big "thank you" for your interest in our organisation and for offering to organise a fundraising ride. The information in this pack is designed to give you ideas and to make your ride as easy as possible.

The result should be a safe, smooth-running event that gives you, your family and friends, and your work colleagues an enjoyable day out – while also benefiting hundreds of others!

For further information about Life Cycle and our work please visit our website:
www.lifecycleuk.org.uk

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Planning

There are three ways of using cycling to raise sponsorship money for Life Cycle.

1. Do your own thing

Many individuals use a bike ride as a way of supporting a good cause. Sometimes their trip is little more than an extended holiday. Sometimes it's long-held ambition such as an "end-to-end" (that's Lands End to John O'Groats) or the C2C (the Coast to Coast route across the Pennines). Occasionally it's something more challenging such as riding the Himalayas or crossing the Sahara!

2. Join established events

An easy way to raise money through cycling is to "piggyback" on an established event. Bristol's Biggest Bike Ride (in June every year) is one such opportunity. Simply put a team together and turn up on the day. There are countless other organised rides in other parts of the country. Many take place during Bike Week in June (see www.bikeweek.org.uk for dates). Some will want you to ride only in aid of a designated charity but many will allow you to select your own good cause (i.e. Life Cycle!)

Another Bike Week event to utilise is Bike2Work (see www.bike2work.info for dates) This is a yearly campaign to persuade more people to cycle to work. Ask colleagues to give up their cars for a day, ride in and raise sponsorship money for Life Cycle at the same time.

Other events to use as an excuse for a cycle ride include Green Transport Week, World Health Day, Heart Awareness Week, European Car Free Day and Road Safety Week. (Check on the internet for dates).

3. Organise a group ride

Get your family, friends and workmates riding and you will be able to raise more money and give everyone a memorable day out. The amount of organisation involved depends on how many riders you're going to involve. The way to make it all run smoothly is to plan the event carefully and to allocate the various tasks to different group members.

We suggest that you start planning at least three months before your ride and you will find it useful to draw up a timetable that lists all the things that need to be done.

The notes that follow will help you plan and publicise your bike ride.

Preparation

Type of route

The type of ride you choose to organise will depend on the level of skill, confidence and skill of your riders. For experienced road riders or mountain bikers you may want to devise something challenging and demanding. However, if you are aiming to involve inexperienced cyclists or young children you should choose an easy, flat, route away from traffic as much as possible.

Across the UK cycle routes are springing up on old railway lines, along riversides and through forests but these are rarely entirely off-road. At some point you are likely to be riding on or crossing over a public road and so you will need to plan accordingly: ensure riders have sufficient ability and use marshals where necessary. If your ride involves lots of riders or uses busy roads you should plan the event in conjunction with the local Police and local council (see also section 'contacts' section)

Get maps of your proposed route, note its length and try to estimate its duration. (Check out to www.lifecycleuk.org.uk or other websites such as www.sustrans.org.uk or www.cyclerides.co.uk)

Planning your route

The start and finishing points should be easy to find. The start in particular, needs to be large enough to hold the volume of people taking part and easily accessible so that riders can assemble before the start. You may need to provide parking if people are bringing their bikes in by car or if riders are arriving by minibus. If you want to use a place such as a pub car park as your starting point you will need permission.

Research the physical characteristics of the route: its length, ascents, descents and any other feature that may affect the ease with which it can be ridden. The easiest way to do this is to ride the route yourself.

If possible try to do a circular or figure of eight route, the former has the advantage of a single start and finish point, and the latter has the advantage of providing choice through multiple stages to cater for different abilities or ages. If a proposed circular route uses roads, try to make it anticlockwise – this should reduce the number of right hand turns (across the traffic flow) that riders will have to make.

Establish what facilities are available on your chosen route. Riders are likely to find toilets, telephones, bike shops, and café's useful. Some off-road trails have well equipped visitor centres with showers and changing facilities.

Time of year

You may want to take the following into account:

- Climate. High temperatures and humidity in late summer or freezing winds and snow in winter will make riding uncomfortable or even unsafe.

- Daylight hours. Winter events will need to end much earlier than summer ones if you are ensure that everyone is safely back before dark.
- Holidays. If you choose to hold your event during school holidays you may find that your friends and family are too busy doing other things to take part.
- Weekdays or weekends. In our 24/7 society weekdays may be just as suitable for many people as weekends. You will need to check with your friends and colleagues first.

Permission

Permission is generally not needed for rides that take place on public roads or on established cycle routes. However, you should notifying the police and the local council as a courtesy to inform them of your plans and to take their advice. If your ride is to take place on private land, or land that is owned by a Government agency such as the Forestry Commission, you will need the permission of the landowner.

Contacts

We suggest you contact the local Police to discuss your plans at an early stage. It is also worth asking for their assistance to help riders cross busy roads or negotiate difficult junctions. Increasingly however, the Police are reluctant to take on such work and will probably advise you to use your own marshals.

Marshals need to be patient, level-headed people with sufficient time to spare. Their job is to guide riders through challenging sections of the route, make it clear to other road users that a bike ride is taking place, and to summon assistance if necessary. Equip your marshals with high-visibility tabards and mobile phones. Remember that marshals are not legally allowed to stop or direct traffic. It helps enormously if the people you use are diplomatic individuals with good communication skills as, on occasion, they may encounter people who are frustrated or annoyed at having their journey “disrupted” by your ride.

We also suggest that you contact the local authority to discuss your plans. Again do this at an early stage. If your route is in an urban area that has problems with litter (particularly glass) or illegal parking in cycle lanes, they may be able to arrange for action to be taken ahead of the ride.

You should also tell local residents about the bike ride if they are likely to be inconvenienced. This can be done by leafleting or using posters.

To help your event run smoothly you may also need:

- A leader at the front of the ride to guide the way, a “sweeper” at the rear to ensure no one gets left behind.
- General helpers to register participants, provide refreshments etc.
- A mechanic to deal with any problems encountered en route.
- People to look after refreshments, water, and rubbish collection.
- A person trained in basic first aid and with the appropriate kit to deal with any minor health issues such as sunburn, or cuts and grazes.
- First Aid support from the St John’s Ambulance Brigade (if you are organising a large event).

Health and Safety

Bikes

All bikes will need to be in good condition. Many well-intentioned people agree to take part in sponsored rides but then turn up on a bike that has been languishing in their garage for a couple of years! A neglected bike is likely to fail.

A comprehensive bicycle safety checklist is provided in the appendix of this pack. We suggest you send copies to everyone who wants to join your ride. If they are unable to check their bikes themselves encourage them to have their bikes serviced by a professional prior to the ride.

For a small fee, Life Cycle can run a Doctor Bike surgery: one of our mechanics will check everyone's bikes, make minor adjustments and repairs, and advise on any major problems that need addressing. This is a cost effective way of having all bikes checked for safety prior to the ride. Booking forms are available on Life Cycle's website.

Encourage riders to carry a simple toolkit. See appendix.

Bodies

If you or your riders are a bit out of practice, or feel that your fitness "isn't what it used to be" try doing some gentle training in the weeks leading up to the event. Riding two or three times a week on a route which has similar terrain and gradients to your proposed event route will improve the riders' fitness and reveal any potential mechanical problems with their bikes. Any riders who feel especially rusty, could book themselves some one-to-one cycle training through Life Cycle.

Any participant who has concerns about their health or who has not exercised for a number of years should speak to their GP before committing themselves to taking part in a sponsored ride.

Ensure the safety and well-being of riders on the day by ensuring they bring:

- Plenty of water in bottles or camelback.
- Other refreshments or food if necessary.
- A basic First Aid kit. See appendix.
- Protection from the elements – waterproofs, sun screen, etc.

Safety during the ride

Make sure all participants ride safely, showing consideration to pedestrians and other road users. Discourage riders from showing off, racing or overtaking. Encourage them to ride in single file and to follow the Highway Code.

As a further aid to safety you might want to consider providing riders with high visibility tabards to wear during the ride. Most bike shops sell them, or you may find that your local council's Road Safety Unit can provide them at low cost.

Encourage riders to wear a helmet, protective gloves and other appropriate clothing. If your ride takes place during dark days or outside daylight hours then riders will need to use lights. High-visibility clothing is a useful aid to safety even during daylight.

Consider setting a minimum age for participation in your ride, or specify that under 16's need to be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Insurance

If you are organising a large event, it may be wish to consider taking out public liability insurance to cover riders and their equipment. During Bike Week this can usually be obtained for free – see www.bikeweek.org.uk . Alternatively, the company Butterworth Spengler are specialists in bike insurance and may be willing to insure your event.

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Disclaimer

The information contained in this sponsorship pack is given in good faith and every attempt has been made to ensure it is accurate and up-to-date. Life Cycle UK accepts no liability for any loss or damage that may be incurred as a result of following the advice given. Organisations referred to in the text do not necessarily endorse the opinions and objectives of Life Cycle UK.

Raising sponsorship

At the back of this pack you will find a template sponsorship form which can be photocopied and distributed to riders.

You might want to consider setting a minimum sponsorship amount, especially if the event has taken a substantial amount of planning, or money has been fronted for refreshments etc. This can also help to focus the minds of your participants when raising sponsorship money!

Publicity

Make it interesting!

Incorporate tandems, recumbents, unicycles or other unusual machinery into your bike ride and the media will sit up and take notice. Riding in fancy dress is another way of grabbing headlines. A word of warning though: people planning to cycle while wearing a costume should ensure that they can see where they are going, can control their bikes properly and that bits of costume don't become tangled up in the chain or spokes. A practice run is strongly recommended!

You will need to start promoting your event several months in advance to enable time for effective fundraising to take place.

Publicising your ride

You can put up posters or leave flyers in a number of places, schools, colleges and work places, libraries, community or medical centres and gyms, local café's, bike shops or anywhere else you can think of (remember to ask permission first).

Through word of mouth with your friends, at your local gym, bike club, community centre,

Promote it through established e-groups and by getting participants to email everyone in their address book (you can even set up a website with electronic sponsorship forms if you have a computer wizard on your team, and promote your event on line).

Text your message to participants who can forward it to their friends. This is a cheap cost effective way of telling as many people as possible about the ride and asking for sponsorship.

The media

Tell local newspapers and TV and radio stations about your event by issuing a news release. A template news release form is included in the appendix of this guide. If possible send photographs along with the news release as this will make the item look more exciting and increase the possibility of the story being used. You could also invite

the local press along to the start or finish of your event. Or you could offer a journalist the opportunity of taking part, even for just a short section of the route.

Make sure your press release includes key information such as:

- The name of the event.
- Where it is being held.
- The date and time.
- Why it is happening.
- How people can get involved.
- Contacts for further information.

When the ride is over, provide the media with a follow-up story with pictures of the event, the amount of money raised and ideally a few positive quotes from riders who took part.

After the ride

When your ride is over it is tempting simply to collapse in an exhausted heap! However, there are a few post-ride actions that need doing.

Do remember to say “thank you” to anyone who gave their time to help organise the ride or who helped in other ways. A simple note or e-mail will do the trick.

It is also worth meeting with those involved with organising the ride for a debrief. Try to make an honest evaluation of what went well and what went less well. Note any learning points. This will be extremely useful if you plan to repeat the event.

Be sure to collect all the sponsorship money that is due. Raising money was, after all, the whole purpose of the ride. Collect the money and mail a single cheque to Life Cycle UK.

Finally, when you’ve recovered from your exhaustion, think about doing another ride next year in aid of Life Cycle. We depend on people like you!

Appendices

1	Template news release
2	Bicycle safety checklist
3	First Aid kit
4	Toolkit
5	Sponsorship form

1. News Release

You may find this news release helpful. Before sending it out to the local media, don't forget to alter it to include information about your particular event.

News release

For immediate release: [insert date release is sent out]

[Suggested headline] **Saddle up to Raise Funds for Cycling Charity!**

Local man/woman [insert name] from [insert town/village] is set to raise hundreds of pounds for the charity Life Cycle UK, on [insert date] by [insert brief description of event].

[Insert name] has been inspired by the work of Life Cycle UK and wants to support the charity's work by organising and undertaking this challenge. Every year Life Cycle helps hundreds of people of all ages take up cycling to benefit their health and well-being and to improve the environment.

Peter Andrews, Director of Life Cycle UK, said: "We are delighted that [insert name] is organising this event to raise money for Life Cycle. As a small charity we are entirely dependant on grants and donations and it only takes a small amount of funding to make a big difference."

[Name of rider] said: "I am hoping to raise at least [insert amount] to help Life Cycle continue with its important work. Cycling is an enjoyable and sociable activity, but also a healthy, green and low-cost means of transport. The money I raise will help others enjoy these benefits."

The ride will start at [insert time and place] and will cover a distance of [insert distance]. To join the ride or to pledge sponsorship money contact [insert contact's name, phone number and e-mail].

For more information about Life Cycle UK, visit www.lifecycleuk.org.uk

Ends

For further information or an interview please contact [insert name] on [insert phone number and e-mail].

2. The bicycle safety checklist

We recommend that riders check the following safety points before taking part in the sponsored ride. Your bike should pass all the safety checks. Bicycles are complex machines. If you are not able to carry out the checks and adjustments yourself, we recommend that you take your bike to a reputable cycle shop.

Bicycle checklist	Pass / fail
a) Fitting:	
Frame size: Can you stand over your bike (just in front of the saddle), with your heels flat on the ground and with a least 30mm clearance between top tube and crotch?	
Saddle height: Sit on the saddle. Can you reach the ground (with your heels flat on the ground if you're a pre-rider, on tip-toe for novice riders and skill builders). Reach: When seated on the saddle can you reach the handle bars and brakes without feeling overstretched?	
Saddle height: Sit on the saddle and put your right foot on the pedal. When the pedal is at its lowest point you should have just a slight bend at the knee.	
b) Tyres:	
Inflation: Are both tyres pumped up? You should barely be able to squeeze the tyre's side-walls in between your finger and thumb. If you can noticeably squeeze the side walls they are too soft.	
Condition: The tyres should have at least 3mm of tread and they should not be cracked or split.	
Obstructions: Nothing should rub against the tyres when the wheels turn.	
c) Wheels:	
Quick releases and wheel nuts: Quick-releases must be firmly closed and the lever not exposed. Are the wheel nuts tight? Wheels should be centralised in the fork and the frame.	
Bearings: Grasp each rim and rock it from side to side. Play at the rim must not exceed 3mm (2mm for small wheeled bikes).	
Rims: Spin the wheels. The rims should not touch the brake blocks or the tyre touch the frame.	
Defects: Check wheel rims for defects (dents etc.) that might cause the brakes to grab.	
Spokes: Spokes should not be corroded or loose. Missing spokes need to be replaced.	
d) Handlebars and saddle:	
Stem: Check the maximum extension height mark has not been exceeded (the mark should not be visible). Turn the bars gently side to side. The stem must stay aligned with front wheel fork.	
Saddle: Grasp each end of the saddle and try to rock it. It should not move, either up and down or side to side. The saddle should be level or point slightly downwards.	
Seat post: Check that the maximum height mark on the seat post has not been exceeded.	
e) Frame and forks:	
Headset: Apply the front brake and rock the front of the bike. There should be no more than a hint of rocking movement between the headset parts (i.e. between top of fork and bottom of frame, and top of frame and adjusting races). Lift the front end of the bike and turn the bars slowly. There should be no more than the merest hint of 'notching'.	
Forks: There must be no signs of accident damage such as wrinkled paint near the top of the forks.	
Alignment of forks: The forks should follow the same line or appear to travel forwards of the head tube.	
Frame: Look for obvious defects including wrinkled paint around where the top tube and down tube meet the head tube. On folding bikes, ensure frame clamps are firmly closed.	
f) Chainset:	
Bottom bracket: Try to rock the cranks from side to side. Any play at the ends of the cranks should not exceed 4mm.	

Pedals: Check that the pedals are complete (no missing rubbers, no excessive wear). Check they are fastened tightly to the cranks.	
Cranks and chainrings: the cranks should be tight on the bottom bracket axle.	
g) Mudguards and racks:	
Attachment: Check mudguard and rack stays are complete and attached firmly.	
h) Lights:	
Attachment: Check that lights (if fitted) are firmly attached and cannot jump off or swing into a wheel. Be particularly wary of lights fitted to the front forks.	
i) Brakes:	
Levers and cables: Apply the brakes, pulling the levers back hard ten times making sure nothing 'gives'. Cables must not be frayed.	
Adjustment: Brakes must make contact with the rim before the lever is pulled back more than one third of its travel.	
Reach: Can you reach and apply both brakes comfortably? Excessive effort should not be required.	
Attachment: The brake levers should be attached firmly to the handlebars. The brake units should be attached firmly to the frame or fork.	
Alignment: Apply the brakes firmly and rock the bike backwards and forwards. Ensure that the brake blocks will not touch or travel under the wheel rims.	
Wear: Check that the brake blocks are not excessively worn. The metal shoe must not touch the rim.	
j) Gears and chain:	
Gears: Go through the gears and ensure that the derailleur does not foul the wheel.	
Chain: Check the chain will not come off the front chain wheel(s) or come off and jam between the smallest rear sprocket and the frame.	
Hub gears: Check that the gears do not slip.	
Chain tension: Chain play should not exceed 25mm at its mid-point between front and rear sprockets.	
Chain lubrication: The chain should be lightly lubricated. A very dry or rusty chain or one with stiff links is likely to break.	

3. A simple First Aid kit

We recommend that you carry the following:

- Bandages (various sizes)
- Sterile gauze
- Adhesive tape
- Antiseptic ointment
- Tweezers
- Scissors
- Antiseptic wipes
- Plastic gloves
- A small bottle of sterile water

4. A simple toolkit

When cycling, we recommend that you carry the following:

- Puncture repair outfit.
- Pump (with correct fitting for your particular type of tyre valve)
- Spare inner tube.
- Set of Allen keys.
- Spare brake cable.
- Spare gear cable.
- Small adjustable spanner.
- Small screwdriver.
- Pliers.
- A few zip-ties for emergency repairs.
- Any specialist tool that your bike requires.

