# Formal Events: how to run your own event

## Overview



Formal events are ticketed fundraising occasions that bring people together to support Marie Curie. They can include balls, ladies' lunches, sportsman dinners, awards evenings and themed gala events. These events often combine food, entertainment, guest speakers and additional fundraising activities.

A successful formal event can typically raise **£5,000+**, with some established events raising **£10,000-£19,000+** through ticket sales, sponsorship and additional fundraising activities.

## Key points to consider

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| **Success Factors**<br>Successful events often have:<br>• Strong community and business networks<br>• Good local sponsorship opportunities<br>• Effective ticket sales and promotion<br>• Engaging entertainment or speakers<br>• Additional fundraising activities on the day<br>• Strong volunteer support | **Timeline**<br>Allow **6-12 months** for planning, particularly if booking popular venues or speakers.<br><br>Key planning areas include:<br>• Venue booking<br>• Sponsorship<br>• Entertainment or speakers<br>• Catering<br>• Ticket sales<br>• Promotion<br><br>Formal events can be run at any time of year, but you may like to theme your event, such as at Christmas. | **Venue Requirements**<br>Choose a venue that:<br>• Fits your expected attendance<br>• Has suitable parking<br>• Offers disabled access<br>• Can provide catering and refreshments (if required)<br>• Has appropriate licences for music or alcohol<br>• Has space for entertainment, auctions or fundraising activities<br><br>Hotels, wedding venues, clubs and function suites often work well. |
| **Entertainment and Speakers**<br>Consider:<br>• Guest speakers<br>• Marie Curie Speaker volunteers<br>• Live music or bands | **Ticket Sales**<br>Ticket sales are usually the main source of income.<br>Ticket prices should reflect:<br>• Catering provided<br>• Venue costs | **Additional Fundraising**<br>Increase income through:<br>• Raffles<br>• Silent auctions<br>• Live auctions<br>• Heads or Tails games |

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| • DJs<br>• Demonstrations or themed entertainment<br><br>Always clarify any costs, travel expenses or venue requirements before booking. | • Entertainment<br>• Event format<br><br>Research similar local events to help set an appropriate price while ensuring a profit is made. You may wish to use Trybooking for online tickets – speak to your CF for more info. | • Prize draws<br>• Corporate matched giving<br>• Donation opportunities during the event<br><br>Many groups find these activities make a significant contribution to overall fundraising. |
| **Sponsorship**<br>Local businesses may help by:<br>• Sponsoring venue costs<br>• Sponsoring entertainment<br>• Purchasing tables<br>• Providing prizes<br>• Contributing through matched funding<br>• Sponsors can be recognised in programmes, event materials and promotional activity | **Promotion**<br>Promote through:<br>• Social media<br>• Local newspapers and magazines<br>• Community groups<br>• Business networks<br>• Friends, family and supporters<br>• Posters and flyers<br><br>Avoid clashes with other local events and begin promotion well in advance. | **Volunteer Roles**<br>You may need volunteers to:<br>• Welcome and register guests<br>• Liaise with venues, speakers and entertainers<br>• Run raffles, auctions and fundraising games<br>• Support event setup and pack down<br>• Take photographs<br>• Act as host or compère<br>• Assist attendees throughout the event |
| **Health & Safety**<br>• Complete an Event Activity Plan and risk assessment.<br>• Obtain venue documents, including:<br>  ○ Public liability insurance<br>  ○ Risk assessments<br>  ○ Terms and conditions<br>  ○ Food hygiene documentation where applicable<br>• For any emergencies on the day, call CFIT on 0800 3047112 | **Event Day**<br>A typical event may include:<br>1. Venue setup and volunteer briefing.<br>2. Guest arrival and welcome drinks.<br>3. Meal, entertainment or speakers.<br>4. Marie Curie presentation, video or speaker.<br>5. Fundraising activities such as raffles and auctions.<br>6. Closing remarks and thank yous.<br>7. Pack down and clear up. | |

## Expected Outcome

With strong sponsorship, effective ticket sales and engaging fundraising activities, a formal event can become a flagship annual fundraiser, typically raising £5,000+ while strengthening relationships with local supporters, businesses and the wider community. For more support on running an event like this, speak to your local Community Fundraiser.

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## Case Study: Falmouth and Penryn Fundraising Group Ball



The Falmouth and Penryn Fundraising Group have been holding their annual ball for Marie Curie for many years. In 2022, the Holly Ball returned after taking a break due to the pandemic.

The event raised over £10,000 and had around 140 attendees and typically has a waiting list of attendees.

The group will source sponsorship from local companies to help cover outlaying costs. This is a great way advertising tool as the group will include their company logo in the ball programme.

The group charge £50 for this Black-Tie event. They raise additional income at their event by holding a raffle for £5 per ticket (prizes have a value of £20 minimum), an auction with 10-12 lots, and organise a Heads or Tails game.

The group have connections with local corporates who will often purchase a table, and as it is near Christmas, it is often used for Christmas parties. The group book the venue in the previous December/January to secure the date. They then use social media to promote as well as sharing with their local contacts.

## Your Formal Event Checklist

### Before the Event

☐ Organise venue, secure a date and gather the paperwork you need
☐ Organise your entertainment or speakers and obtain the paperwork you need
☐ Prepare a press release from our template
☐ Consider sponsorship from local businesses
☐ Organise the catering with the venue, ensuring dietary requirements are catered for
☐ Decide on the ticket price and start selling your tickets
☐ Promote the event on social media and through your networks

### On the Day

☐ Organise volunteers and a photographer
☐ Set up the venue and any activities you're running
☐ Manage the entertainment provider
☐ First aid – this may be provided by the venue
☐ Run extra fundraising activities (raffle/tombola)
☐ Thank your attendees and announce the amount you've raised if you know the figures
☐ Clear down the venue

### After the Event

☐ Send out a post event press release/social media post with photos
☐ Review the event with your group members and Community Fundraiser
☐ If any incidents have occurred, ensure that you notify your Community Fundraiser
☐ Thank the venue, your entertainment providers and volunteers

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