**Charity communications guidance**

On Friday 13 March 2020 the organisers of the UK’s largest sportive, the Virgin Money London Marathon, announced that this year’s event will be postponed until 04 October 2020. This measure has been taken in response to the UK approach to the Coronavirus.

Here is guidance about sharing this news through your communications channels.

It is intended as guidance only.

**What to consider**

**People**

* Arrange a meeting of key people at your charity. This should include your CEO, Marketing or Communications lead and your Fundraising lead
* Identify the best spokesperson for your charity
* Keep your stakeholders in mind right from the start
* Once a plan has been finalised, brief all staff

**Information**

* Facts are important. For the official statement from the Virgin Money London Marathon, visit <https://www.virginmoneylondonmarathon.com/en-gb/news-media/latest-news/item/2020-virgin-money-london-marathon-postponed-to-sunday-4-october/>
* Ensure you can access the data of all your marathon runners efficiently

**Public messaging**

* Manage people's expectations. Let people know how they can find out information from you, where they can find it and how often you will update the information
* Offer support and answer questions. You may wish to publish a list of FAQs for your runners or their supporters
* Share empathy, but not individual opinions

**Action checklist**

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| --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Completed?** |
| Meeting of key staff / Chair to coordinate response to this news |  |
| Facts confirmed and verified |  |
| Implications considered – list the top 5 |  |
| Create a list of who needs to be told.  This list may include:   * Staff and volunteers (including remote workers and anyone on annual or sick leave) * All members of the Board of Trustees * Marathon runners * Charity clients / service users * Charity supporters * Charity funders and major donors * VIPs * Media contacts / press |  |
| Create the statements you wish to share. These should be approved by your CEO / Chair and include information about how you will be sharing news in the coming weeks and months.  You may wish to:   * Give staff a script to follow so everyone feels comfortable answering the telephone and email enquiries about this news * Create a list of FAQs for runners (see the list the end of this document for common questions you may be asked) * Draft a press release |  |
| Begin communicating your statements.  You may wish to:   * Individually telephone each marathon runner to reassure them * Create a bespoke web page to direct all traffic about this news to one place * Share a link to this web page on all your social media channels * Send an e-shot to your stakeholders to inform them about this we page and reassure them of how you will be managing the news |  |
| Monitor the news as it develops.  This may include:   * If anything changes or updates are published, sharing them on your channels * Monitoring what the key concerns and questions are from your stakeholders so you can develop responses and share them |  |

**FAQ list for runners**

You may wish to publish a list of frequently asked questions for runners.

Even if you don’t know all the answers, you can reassure people by letting them know you will share the answers when they are known.

Remember to include information about **how** people can stay updated and **when** you’ll be publishing updates over the coming weeks and months.

Here’s a list of questions you may wish to consider:

* Will I be able to keep my marathon place with your charity?
* What will happen to the money I have raised?
* I have booked hotels and accommodation for the event. Will I be able to get a refund?
* What should I say to my friends and family who have sponsored me?
* If you have a reception for runners after the race, will the venue change?
* What if the new date clashes with something I have already planned?
* Will there now be spare places in the marathon if some people drop out?
* Should I continue training and if so, what training plan should I follow?
* Should I extend the fundraising deadline on my online fundraising page and if so, how do I do this?
* Is the marathon running show (the Expo) still happening on the same date? If not, when will it be?
* I recently deferred because of an injury. Can I defer a deferral?
* When will the ballot for 2021 now open?
* What about running club places?
* How do I stay updated about this news?