



CHARITY APPEALS

Charity Appeals on BBC Television and Radio

General Information

Introduction

The following notes have been drawn up on the basis of general experiences of BBC charity appeals and also from audience reaction surveys. We hope they will be helpful both to charities that have been allocated broadcast appeals and to those that wish to apply.

Applications are considered by the BBC Appeals Advisory Committee (AAC), a body of experts from outside the BBC with wide experience of the charitable sector.

It is a provision of the appeals policy that three years should elapse between successful applications for UK-wide broadcast appeals. Unsuccessful applicants are eligible to apply again after two years, subject to meeting the criteria.

1 Applications for UK-wide broadcast appeals

The BBC's UK-wide broadcast appeals are made weekly on Sunday mornings and evenings on BBC Radio 4 and monthly on BBC television in the Sunday *Lifeline* programme on BBC One. The Radio 4 appeal is repeated on Thursday afternoons and, except in special circumstances, there is a repeat of *Lifeline* during the following week.

Applications are considered in competition with others received and a successful application may result in either a radio or a television broadcast. Because there are more radio than television slots it is, of course, more likely that a successful application will result in a radio rather than a television appeal.

2 BBC Nations and English regions: broadcast charity appeals policy

In addition to the UK-wide broadcast appeals, there are periodical national appeals in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Applications from charities whose work is focused on these nations are considered at regular intervals by the respective National Appeals Advisory Committees.

Local charities

Local charities working in a single discrete area will be advised on contacting the BBC Charity Appeals Office to apply to their BBC local radio station.

Regional, English, or England and Nations' charities

Charities whose work applies to a wider area of England, **or** to the whole of England but not the Nations, **or** to England and one or two of the Nations only, will be advised that they are not eligible for a UK-wide appeal but may submit an application to the AAC for consideration as an English or England and Scotland/Northern Ireland/Wales appeal.

3 Amounts raised by broadcast appeals

In 2005 a total of £1,426,304 was raised from the regular BBC television and Radio 4 appeals. Listeners donated £1,107,236 to individual charities featured on the weekly Radio 4 appeals. This included over £661,000 donated to the annual Christmas Appeals for St Martin-in-the-Fields. Viewers of BBC One's monthly *Lifeline* programme donated £319,068 to the 12 charities featured over the year. The estimated average individual donation for radio was £37 and for television £40.

4 The myth of the month

It is sometimes felt that the results of appeals can be affected by the time of year at which they are broadcast. For instance, the holiday months of July and August, along with bank holiday weekends, may be regarded as bad times to have appeals. An analysis of results of appeals broadcasts shows that there is no clear relationship between the amounts raised and the months of the year. However, some television appeals may have been adversely affected in warmer weather because of the early evening transmission time.

5 The audience

In the absence of more detailed research, there does not appear to be any obvious correlation between the audience size, the number of donors and the amount raised by the appeals. The target audience is all-important, as a successful appeal is more dependent upon the right sort of audience than simply a large audience. A small audience may be as effective, in terms of raising money, as a large one.

The Radio 4 audience is smaller than the television audience but may contain a higher proportion of potential givers because it is predominantly older and middle-class. Research into charitable giving has suggested that it increases with age and income.

6 Timing of an appeal and wider publicity

An appeal is more likely to be successful if it is presented as part of a wider campaign on behalf of the cause or organisation concerned. Although all regular BBC appeals are billed in *Radio Times*, this gives only very short notice of the broadcast, and the generation of wider pre-publicity in, for example, the national press or among existing donors to a charity is likely to increase donations. An appeal can also be seen as an opportunity to raise awareness among potential future donors.

NB: Television programme schedules are subject to alteration at short notice, and charities which are granted television appeals should be careful to defer advising their supporters of the precise transmission date and time of *Lifeline* and making any specific promotions to this effect until they receive confirmation of the date and time.

If possible, it is advisable to time an application for an appeal so that if a broadcast is allocated it will coincide with a special event or week.

7 Production of an appeal

The BBC producers will provide help and guidance, will organise and oversee the recording, and will make sure that the final broadcast meets the BBC's technical and editorial standards. They will advise on the choice of speaker, the kind of treatment which could be most effective and, in consultation with the charity, the contents of the script.

8 Methods of giving

Ease of giving is an important factor in the success of an appeal. For all appeals, on both radio and television, the BBC Actionline (an 0800 number) is the standard channel through which donations are made. A charge is made for this service and organisations that are allocated BBC appeals are offered telephone back-up facilities for the receipt of credit card donations.

Significant amounts can be raised through credit card donations, although postal donations still form the bulk of the total. As an approximate guide, credit card donations currently account for some 20% of the total. It is also possible to donate online to the Radio 4 Appeal.

If the use of a Freepost address is being considered, it is important to remember that it takes time to arrange facilities and that the cost varies. Arrangements must, of course, be completed in advance of the **recording** of an appeal.

Key contacts

Ken Burrell – tel: 028 9053 5773

BBC Information client team – tel: 0141 307 5782

9 Response to the appeal

Dealing with the response to an appeal may involve extra work for an organisation. Hundreds of letters may be received in a matter of days. Apart from dealing with the money itself, organisations are required to acknowledge donations where the donors provide an address and have not stated they do not require an acknowledgement.

In addition, an appeal may generate requests for help, information or membership details, and many of these enquiries will require research and individual responses.

10 Application of appeal funds

Special arrangements are necessary for organisations which are appealing for funds for a particular project and where the money raised is insufficient to carry out the specified purpose, or where, for any other reason, the specified purpose cannot be carried out.

Under the 1993 Charities Act, the Charity Commissioners are able to establish a scheme enabling the funds to be used for a similar purpose, but only after the organisation has sent a written enquiry to all identifiable donors, and has advertised in a national newspaper, inviting the donors to state within three months if they want their donations either returned or used for the similar purpose; in the latter event, they are required to sign a standard form of disclaimer. The scheme will also contain a provision whereby, for up to six months, any donor may claim reimbursement from the charity. It is likely to be some time before the process is finalised and the money is available to be used. The advice of the Charity Commissioners should therefore be sought at the earliest opportunity if it is expected that there will be a problem in applying the appeal funds for the purpose for which they are given.

If funds are raised in excess of what is required to meet the particular purpose, a scheme to provide for the use of the surplus funds will also be required, and the Charity Commissioners should be consulted accordingly.

Where the appeal is for the charity's **general** purposes, the money may simply be added to general funds and used in the same way as any other income.

11 Other BBC requirements

When the Appeals Advisory Committee has recommended an organisation for an appeal, the organisation must sign and return a document accepting the BBC's conditions. After the appeal has been broadcast, the organisation must complete and return a monitoring form within six weeks of the broadcast, giving the result of the appeal and any feedback.

For further information please contact:

BBC Charity Appeals Office
MC4 D1 Media Centre
201 Wood Lane
London W12 7TQ

Tel: 020 8008 1198

Email: charityappeals@bbc.co.uk

Website: bbc.co.uk/charityappeals