GREAT ORMOND STREET
HOSPITAL CHARITY

How to organise a ball or dinner

Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity. Registered charity no. 1160024. October 2026

Every day brings new challenges at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Every day, around 800 seriously ill children and young people are seen at GOSH from all over the UK for life-changing treatment and care.* Every day, doctors and nurses battle the most complex illnesses, and the brightest minds come together to achieve pioneering medical breakthroughs.

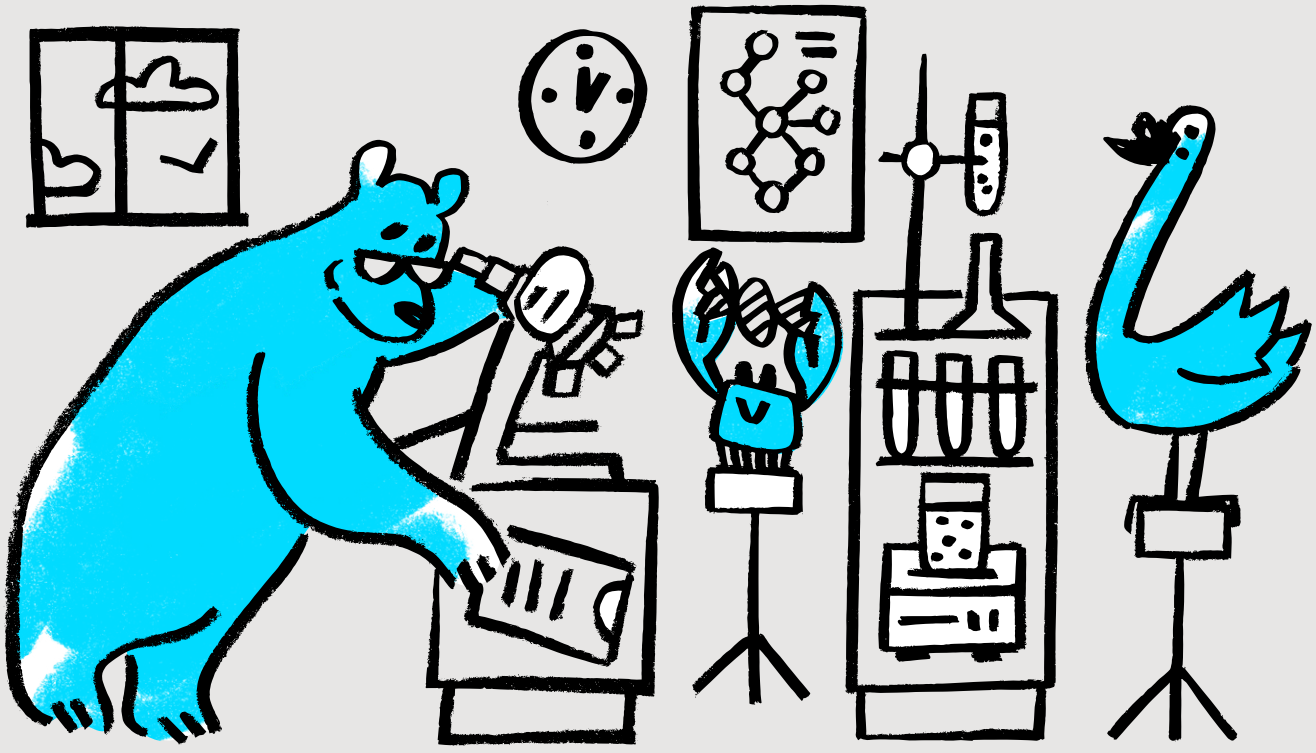
And every day is a chance for you to make a difference.

This extraordinary hospital has always depended on charitable support to give seriously ill children the best chance to fulfil their potential.

A better future for seriously ill children starts here.

A charity ball or dinner is a fantastic way to bring friends, family, colleagues and community together for a great cause. Our top tips will ensure that you raise as much money as possible for Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity and that your guests have a night to remember!

**These figures are based on known data for 2024/25 financial year.*



First things to think about

We'd recommend that you give yourself **at least three months** to prepare, but start planning as early as possible.

Choose a date that doesn't clash with any sporting, local or school events or religious festivals, and try to avoid bank holidays.

Rally up your friends, family or colleagues to help you plan, deliver and manage the event. This can be a formal committee, or an informal group. Try to allocate everybody a job that they are comfortable with and one that uses their skills.

Make use of all of their various contacts to help you sell tickets, obtain raffle prizes, and get sponsors for the food, drink and entertainment. You never know what you can get for free!

Do you have a theme? This will influence a lot of aspects of the event such as dress code, food, music and any decorations, so be sure to decide this in advance.

Manage your budget

Be realistic and set a target of how much you want to raise.

Next, calculate how much you are going to have to spend on:

- Venue
- Food and drink
- Entertainment
- Decorations

Venue

Think about how big you want your event to be, and how many tickets you could sell! Timing the event is important for cost: booking your venue on a weeknight will usually cost less than on a weekend. Most venues will negotiate costs for charitable events – if you don't ask, you don't get!

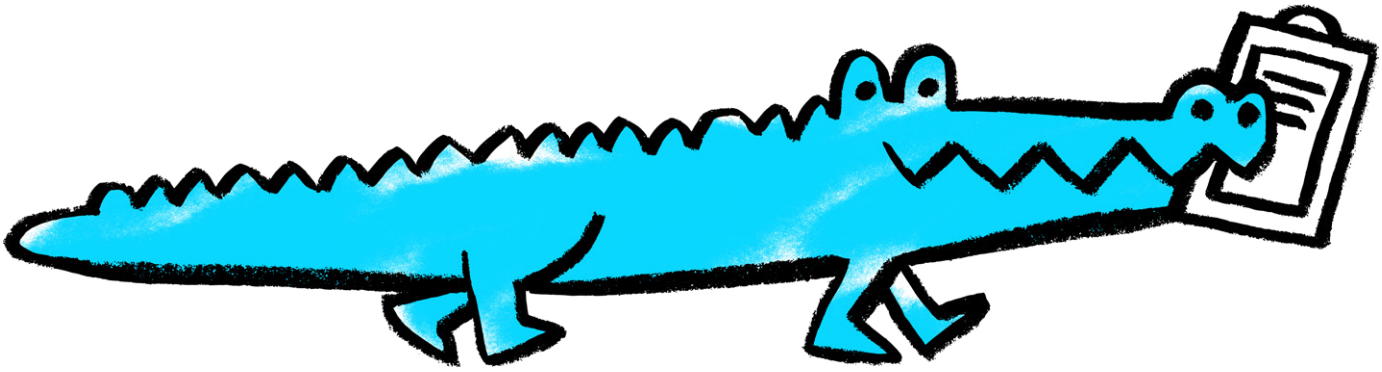
Do you need a Temporary Events Notice to organise your event? Find out if you should get one here: **gov.uk/temporary-events-notice.**

The venue may be able to tell you if they hold a licence you can use. Alternatively, you can contact your local authority to check.

Remember to check: If there is a refundable deposit, what are the conditions for getting the whole amount back?

Top tip

You might want to set up a JustGiving page and create a QR code so people can donate at the event – and you can watch your fundraising total go up and up! Find out more about creating a QR code for your JustGiving page at **https://justgiving.com/**



Food and drink

If you decide to have a meal as the focal point of your event, it's important that the food is of good quality. However, be cautious not to overspend and if using caterers, get a few quotes before you put any money down. To avoid wastage, check for any dietary requirements and ask for menu choices beforehand.

Entertainment

Let people know why you are supporting Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity and they may be willing to perform at discounted rates. Use any musical contacts you may have and put the ask out to friends and family.

If you're playing music, you may require a license. A PRS for Music licence allows you to play music on your premises, so check if the venue already has one.

Decorations

To save costs on decorations and to reinforce the charitable purpose, use Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity branded materials to decorate your venue. To order your materials, email **community.events@gosh.org** or call **020 3841 3131.**



Top tip

Ask a local business such as a wine merchant or a local pub to sponsor the event by providing a few bottles for the tables or a drinks reception.

Planning your ball and dinner

Tickets

Once you've calculated your total costs, you should have a better idea of how much you'll charge per ticket.

The money you make on ticket sales should at least equal your outgoings, so that any money raised on the night is donated straight to Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity. Don't be tempted to undersell your event to secure attendance.

Provided that your event is marketed well, people will pay for good food and entertainment, and are more likely to be generous knowing that the proceeds are going to a good cause. You may choose to pay for your event by using some of the proceeds. If you decide to do this, you'll need to be transparent about the percentage of ticket money that will be used to pay for the event. Ensure that you include this information on any materials you produce.

Event sponsorship

Offering sponsorship is a great way to secure extra funds and save money for your event. Whoever you choose to approach, remember to explain why you're fundraising in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity and what they will get in exchange for sponsoring your event.

In return for sponsorship, you can offer to:

- Display their logo around the event venue
- Dedicate a page in the event brochure
- Provide a table for free
- Provide a number of tickets for free
- Thank them during the speech

Top tip

Start with companies who already know you as they will be more inclined to lend their support.

It's a sell-out!

Once you've finalised all of the details, start selling those tickets! Invite everybody that you and your committee can, from friends and family to members of local organisations and groups. On invites, explain why you're raising money in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity and encourage guests who can't attend to make a donation instead. Create posters and ask if you can display them in your office, local shops, libraries and community centres.

Keep everyone in the loop and share details about your event on social media, via email and text.

Top tip

Encourage each guest to bring a plus-one – it's a really easy way to double your numbers!



Planning for the big day

Create a realistic timeline for the evening, taking into consideration the time needed to set and clean up. Check when you can gain access to the venue and what time you need to leave. The more fun your guests have, the more money people are likely to donate. Therefore, it's important to make your event as interactive and fun as possible. Why not try out some of our tried and tested fundraising games?

Fundraising games and additions

Heads or tails

Everyone pays an agreed fee to play (we suggest £5, £10 or £20) and puts their fee into an envelope. Everyone stands up and they are asked to choose 'heads' (putting their hands on their head) or 'tails' (putting their hands on their bottom). A coin is tossed and the result announced. All those who lose sit down and this continues until you are left with a winner. The winner gets a prize (we suggest a bottle of bubbly).

Show a GOSH video

If you have the facilities, we can provide you with a video to show on the night. Check out the videos on our Youtube channel at youtube.com/@ GOSHCharity or contact the team on **community.events@gosh.org.**

Auctions and raffles

Auctions and raffles are a fantastic way to get the room spending money, and are a popular addition to any ball or dinner! Unlike raffles and lotteries, auctions have the benefit of not falling under gambling law. However, there are a few bits of legislation you need to be aware of before deciding to run your auction, so check out our How to Organise a Raffle or Auction guide here: **https://www.gosh.org/organisecharityraffle**

Speakers

It's really important that the charitable purpose of the event is reinforced throughout the night, so organise a master of ceremonies to commentate throughout the event.

We can try and find you a speaker from the charity. Our Charity Ambassadors are based around the UK and have close, personal connections with the hospital. Contact charity.ambassador@gosh.org if you're interested in finding one.



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After your event

Encourage people to take lots of photos on the night – this will be a night to remember! At the end of the night, or after you've reconciled all of the money taken, remember to announce the amount that you've raised.

Follow up the event with photos, details of how much was raised and further thanks to all those who made it possible. Send a press release about the event to local media with photos. Contact us for a press release template on **community.events@gosh.org.**

Most importantly, make sure that you and all your guests enjoy themselves and have fun!

Once your guests have left, thank your volunteers for their help. Remember to thank sponsors, the venue, and catering company for their time and support.

Money

- Consider what money you need to have available on the night (eg a float for a raffle) and how you will manage this.
- Ask the venue if they have a safe you can use. Make regular deposits on the night to ensure that volunteers aren't holding on to a lot of money all evening – this will also help you keep track of your fundraising.
- Ask guests to Gift Aid their donations. Email **community.events@gosh.org** to request donation envelopes and Gift Aid forms. We cannot claim Gift Aid on ticket sales, raffle ticket sales or anything other than a donation. For more information on gift aid please visit **https://www.gosh.org/fundraisingfaqs**
- To pay in your money, please call us on 020 3841 3131 and we can send you out a giro slip or pass you our bank details for a transfer. Make any cheques payable to 'Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity' and send them in with a covering note to **Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity, 40 Bernard Street, London, WC1N 1LE.**

Top tip

Please ensure you have two people present when counting any money raised. You should do this in a secure location and not in public. Please return the money you have raised as soon as possible and in any case no later than six weeks after the date of your event.

Keep it safe and legal

Please check our **Community Fundraising Guidelines** for everything you need to know to keep it safe and legal.
Visit: **gosh.org/guidelines.**

For more ideas, tips and materials, visit:
gosh.org/fundraisinghelp.

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Please do get in touch

Our values

At GOSH Charity we strive to treat patients and their families, supporters, volunteers and anybody else involved in fundraising for the Charity with fairness, respect, tact and dignity. We expect anyone involved in fundraising for GOSH Charity, or anyone representing the GOSH Charity brand, to uphold these values too.

Contact the team

community.events@gosh.org

020 3841 3131

Find out more

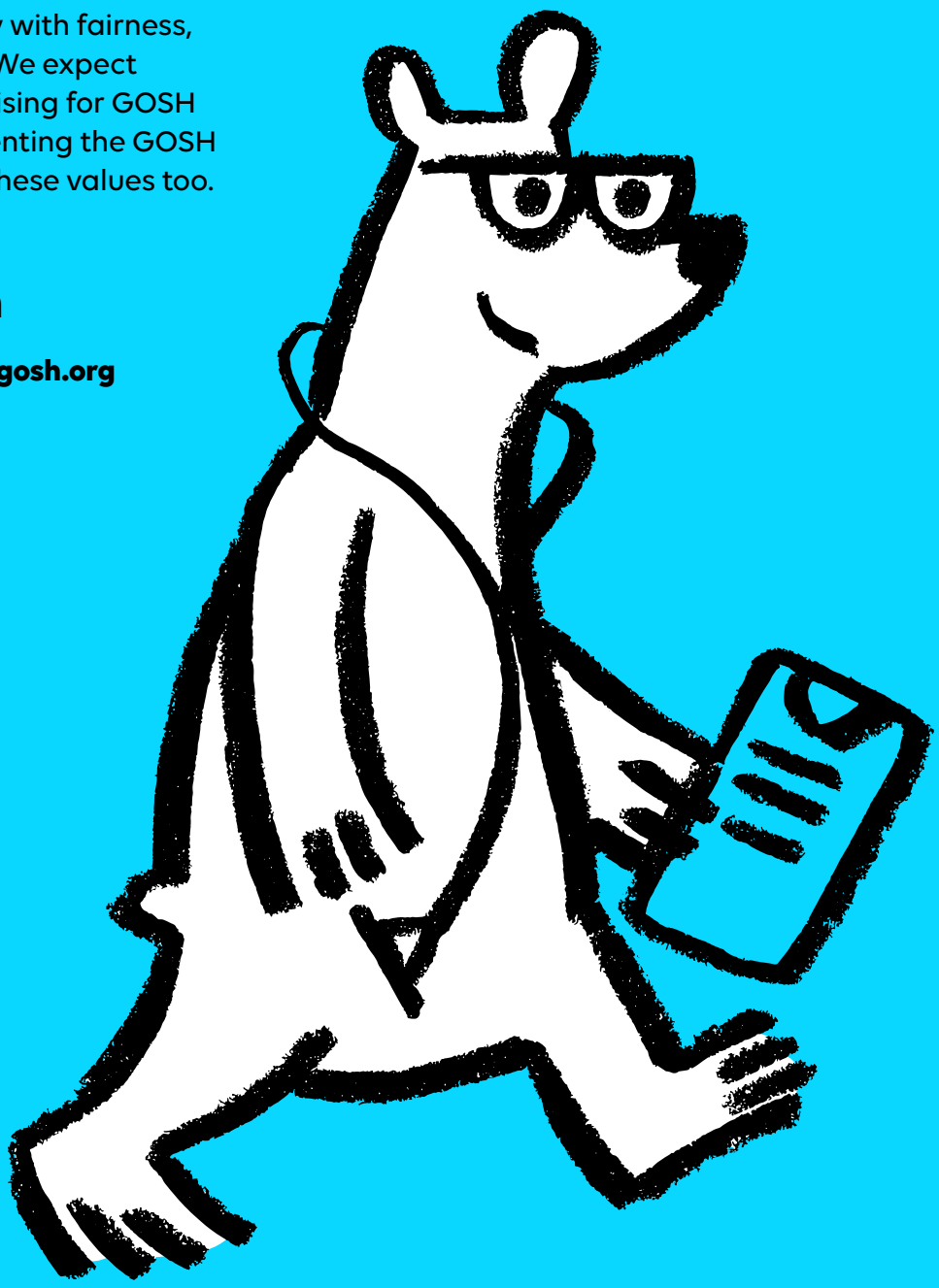
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