



# fundraising toolkit

# What's this?

This toolkit will help you to help the Abortion Support Network (ASN) help women from Ireland and Northern Ireland who urgently need to access a safe and legal abortion in England. What we need most for these women is money. This easy-to-follow toolkit gives you the who, what, where, when and how on raising money in a variety of rewarding ways, whether on a small or larger scale.

Abortion is illegal in the Republic of Ireland and severely restricted in Northern Ireland. ASN helps these women access safe and legal abortions in England by providing accommodation and desperately-needed money to fund flights and procedures.

ASN is currently the only organisation providing financial support for women travelling to England for an abortion. We are funded entirely through donations (and fund-raising!) and are run solely by unpaid volunteers.

# Contents

Introduction to ASN.....	Page 4
Fast Facts on Abortion.....	Page 5
ASN Case Studies.....	Page 6
Basic Fundraising Rules.....	Page 7
Fundraising Ideas.....	Page 8
Publicising Events.....	Page 10
Thank You.....	Page 11

# Introduction

## Introduction to ASN

What would you do if the condom broke? If your pill hadn't worked? If you had been raped? Or if you were faced with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy? What if you lived in a country where abortion was illegal? And you had no money? In the UK, women can access safe, legal abortions in most circumstances on the NHS. Unfortunately, this is not the case for women in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland where abortion is illegal in almost all circumstances. ASN – a small, all volunteer-run organisation – is passionately dedicated to providing financial assistance and accommodation to these women.

## What ASN has achieved so far

Women travelling from Ireland to England for an abortion have to pay the full cost of the abortion. They are also often faced with additional costs such as last-minute travel fares, accommodation costs and childcare. The sum of all costs associated with the abortion can cost anywhere between £400-£2000 depending on every individual woman's circumstance and stage of pregnancy. ASN strives to help each and every woman who makes contact. Without constant fundraising this proves impossible. Every contribution to ASN – large or small – makes an immediate impact on women's lives. With your help, we will continue to provide financial and emotional support to women in desperate need.

## Who can help ASN

Everyone who believes that women have the right to control their own bodies and fertility can help women exercise this right by supporting ASN. If you believe that women living in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland should have access to safe, legal abortions, you are already an ASN supporter. And it would be even better if you helped us to raise some much needed cash!

Fundraising for ASN is something you can fit into your life, however little spare time you have. Any time spent fundraising is extremely valued and appreciated by ASN. If you are interested please contact us (details below). We are excited to hear from you!

## Contact information

Mara Clarke, Director and Founder  
mara@abortionssupport.org.uk  
[www.abortionssupport.org.uk](http://www.abortionssupport.org.uk)  
+44 (0) 7897 611 593

*"Thank you so much; you have been of so much help and we greatly appreciate it."*  
**40 year old mother of four and her husband**

# Fast Facts on Abortion

- In 2011, at least 5,156 women travelled from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to access abortions in England. [[Department of Health](#)]
- When the 1967 Abortion Act passed in the UK, it was not extended to Northern Ireland. This has created an ambiguous situation where a woman is *technically* able to access an abortion if she has a serious medical or psychological problem that would endanger her life if she continues her pregnancy, if a doctor detects abnormalities in the foetus or if a woman has become pregnant as a result of rape. In practice, permission to have an abortion is almost never granted, even if a woman's life is in danger. Until the law changes, women must seek an abortion in another country.
- Women in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland seeking an abortion face immense difficulties and hardship. They have to find the money to pay for the cost of the trip and procedure, often lose money by taking time off work and sometimes have the added expenses of overnight accommodation and childcare for children left at home. These costs can range from £400 to £2,000. Most women have the additional stress of maintaining secrecy about their abortion back home and the fear of negative reaction from close family and friends. As a result, the women ASN supports are often incredibly isolated and many travel alone.
- Between January 1980 and December 2008, at least 137,618 women travelled from the Republic of Ireland for abortion services in Britain.
- A [2004 Crisis Pregnancy Agency study](#) reported that 90% of 18-45 year olds support abortion in certain circumstances, with 51% stating that women should unconditionally have the right to choose an abortion. In 2007, an Irish Times Behaviour and Attitudes Poll found that 54% of women believe the Government should take steps to permit abortion. In a 2010 poll in the Irish Times, 60% of 18-35 year olds were in favour of legalising abortion.
- Worldwide, [47,000 women per year DIE](#) because of unsafe abortions and countless more are severely injured. These deaths are preventable.
- Even if your friends, course mates or family in England do not class themselves as being pro-choice, they are guaranteed a choice. Women in Ireland and Northern Ireland are not guaranteed a choice.

*"I just don't feel financially ready to have a child."*  
**23 year old student**

# ASN Case Studies

Fundraising for ASN can be just as rewarding for you as it is for the women ASN supports. Below are case studies of the women who have benefited from ASN's support.

- A 37 year old single mother who was recently relocated by a domestic violence organisation to escape an abusive partner. Struggling to find work and make a life in a new place with no social support, she then realised she was pregnant by her former partner. ASN was able to help her with a grant towards her £590 procedure.
- A young student who contacted us at first in the early stages of pregnancy but was then incorrectly informed by her doctor that she was no longer pregnant. Several months later she got back in touch after finding out that she was over 22 weeks pregnant. ASN helped her with booking her flights, overnight accommodation and a grant towards her procedure.
- A single mother whose marriage broke up due to the severity of her postnatal depression and who became pregnant despite taking the morning after pill.
- A couple with children who had exhausted every possible avenue for finding the money to pay for flights and the abortion itself. They had both been made redundant and are on benefits. They have a mortgage and loans, none of which they can extend or defer due to their unemployed status.
- A young single parent, recently laid off from her job and pregnant as the result of rape. She was so desperate for funds for her procedure that she was considering contacting her rapist for financial assistance. To add to her distress, the counselling service she contacted when she was raped was not supportive of her choosing to have an abortion.
- A woman who called ASN the morning of her teenage daughter's appointment from the airport. The loan they were expecting had fallen through the night before and they were terrified they'd be turned away if they turned up short of money.
- A married couple with several children and financial difficulties. Prior to getting pregnant again they were so determined not to have more children that they asked their doctor about sterilisation, only to be told that she was too young and that they could not afford it anyway.
- A college student who can barely afford rent and groceries, let alone travelling to England to pay privately for an abortion.
- *"Though my child will have to do without Christmas presents this year, at least the children of the friend I no longer have to borrow money from will have gifts. Thank you very, very much,"* 27 year old single mother

As these cases show, women are faced with a range of circumstances when they make the decision to have an abortion. ASN is a vital and in some cases the *only* source of support to the women who contact us. We do not discriminate by age, race, religion, sexuality or personal circumstance. Most importantly, no woman needs to justify her decision to us. We exist to support women in the decisions they make.

# Basic Fundraising Rules

Being passionate about a cause is what puts the “fun” in fundraising! Fundraising is the backbone of any charity. ASN would not be here today without it.

ASN does not expect to raise huge sums of money (although this would be great!). The reality is that grassroots fundraising brings in small but crucial amounts and every donation received is hugely appreciated. ASN is grateful for any time individuals dedicate to fundraising, whether it’s a one off event or an activity held on a regular basis.

Fundraising activities achieve more than just raising money; they help to increase awareness and support. You may be surprised to find out how many people don’t know that abortion is illegal in the Republic of Ireland and that women in Northern Ireland do not share the same rights as those in the rest of the UK. Through fundraising, you help publicise ASN’s work, build new networks and get more people involved. These are just some of the things that can be achieved through the wonderful efforts of those fundraising on behalf of ASN!

**\* The golden rule of grassroots fundraising is to make the most of your local venues, amenities and services. \***

Tapping into the vast amount of local meeting places is critical. These may include:

- Community spaces and social centres
- University halls and classrooms
- Pubs
- Flats/houses
- Libraries
- Office conference rooms

The main theme here is to find a space anywhere which is **free!** There are plenty of places around that will allow events and meetings to be held for free (particularly if you tell them it’s for charity).

Another important rule to follow when fundraising for ASN is not to shy away from using the word **abortion**. We must not obscure the fact that our fundraising aim and goal is to assist women access safe and legal abortions.

*"If I am not able to do this before I am 18 weeks and 6 days the cost doubles to over €1500, at the moment it is €700 which seems impossible. I just cannot see any way to do this. I had no idea that women in Ireland had to go through this."*

**A recently separated mother**

# Fundraising Ideas

There are many ways in which fundraising can be fun *and* productive. Abortion is a serious topic but this does not mean that fundraising for ASN has to be serious. Fundraising also doesn't have to be a huge time commitment. There are various things you can do which allow you to tailor fundraising to your circumstances.

## **5 quick and easy fundraising ideas:**

- Offer to do something your friends and family have been nagging you to do and attach a price to it. You'll do it if they donate to ASN. You can also offer to match their gift!
- Have an eBay or car boot sale. Go through your things and your friends' things and sell unwanted items for ASN.
- Have a dinner party. Charge your friends for a fabulous dinner at your house. Cook something gourmet or unusual. Charge for drinks too!
- Ask five people to give you all their pocket change for a month, save yours and pool it together.
- Tell your friends and family that instead of birthday and/or holiday gifts, you want them to donate to ASN.

## **'Staying in!' fundraising ideas:**

- Invite your friends to a film night round yours! Screen a film that touches on abortion. Tell attendees in advance that you will be asking for donations to ASN. Don't be afraid to pass around the donation bucket!

Suggested films include: 4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days, The Cider House Rules, Dirty Dancing, Fast Times at Ridgemont High, If These Walls Could Talk, Revolutionary Road, Riding in Cars With Boys and Vera Drake.

- Hold a one-off or regular book club! Email ASN and we can supply you with suggestions of books. As with the film club, make sure book clubbers know you'll be passing the donation bucket around for ASN.
- Have people round for a games night! You could have a Singstar karaoke-off, argue the spelling of foetus vs. fetus over Scrabble or play high-stakes poker with both winning and losing teams donating to ASN.

## **'Going out!' fundraising ideas:**

- Hold a raffle to raise some money! Ask your friends, family and work colleagues to donate items to raffle off at a party or pub gathering. Anything from a bottle of wine to a box of chocolates, from a spa service to a weekend retreat. You could also approach local businesses or your employer to donate an item. If you have willing friends, you could raffle off skills and talent where you sell a friend's talent to the highest bidder, such as *"win a 3-course dinner cooked by \_\_\_\_\_!"* or *"win a customised facial provided by \_\_\_\_\_!"*

- Put on an open mic, comedy or quiz night! Social events are a great way to raise money by including the local community. This is an excellent option for a group of friends or university students. Events such as quiz nights and open mic nights are easy and popular. You can raise money through charging entry *and* by putting the infamous donation bucket out. You could also use a raffle, bake sale or other add-on to maximise the amount you raise for ASN.

Planning an event like this is dependent upon using the free amenities in your community. If you choose to hold it in a pub or bar, it's a good idea to declare that your event is for charity as they may reduce or even waive the cost of holding it on their premises. If you are a university student, your uni will probably have a central email where you can contact the administrator to send an email around informing students that you are looking for performers for an open mic or comedy night. Create and post up and online posters and flyers. Email ASN for any other promotional information you need to help make your event a great success.

### **Some final words on planning fundraising events**

Depending on the size, location and date of your event, we may be able to send an ASN representative along to speak. We can also provide you with donation and standing order forms and ASN annual reports for your event.

Remember to always include a signup sheet wherever your event is held so that you can record the details of people interested in supporting or learning more about ASN.

These are not the only fundraising activities you can do. We're always keen to hear new, exciting and imaginative ideas for events. Only give as much time to fundraising for ASN as you can and want to. There is no pressure to commit to any particular number of events or activities, so fundraise in any way you like. From a one-off coffee morning event to a monthly pub quiz, every effort is greatly appreciated.

*"These people [protesters outside family planning organisations in Ireland] don't know anything about me or my situation. And for the Irish government to make me travel and go into debt and sneak around like a criminal is just disgusting."*

**Mother of three**

# Publicising Events

Publicising your ASN fundraising events is crucial. Without a good turnout at your event you may have a difficult time raising money. And if you want people to attend they need to know exactly what's going on!

There are many ways to publicise your event such as:

- 1) Social media. This is key so that people can talk about and share your event.
- 2) Email groups
- 3) Posters and flyers posted around your university, workplace or communal spaces
- 4) Simply talking about it in daily conversation to your friends, family or peers!

## **Social Media**

Contact your friends, peers and colleagues by setting up an event on Facebook. Invite all your contacts to the event and ask them to share it. Promote it consistently on Twitter where others can retweet it to their followers.

## **Email groups**

Don't forget to email all your contacts and relevant email groups (like your local feminist network) as many might not be on Facebook or Twitter. Make sure to include all the relevant information about your event – date, start and end time, location and public transport options.

## **Posters and flyers**

Bold and striking posters and flyers are an effective way of publicising your fundraiser. We can provide you with language and logos to help you create materials - just email us.

For your snazzy posters to get attention, put them in communal places such as local hang outs, cafes, libraries, work notice boards or inside stall doors in the ladies' loos! Flyers can also easily be handed out or placed on tables and at coffee shops, meeting places, student lecture halls or on memo boards.

*"Thank you so much for all your help. Words cannot express how much you have helped me."*  
**38 year old woman**

# Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this toolkit and consider fundraising for ASN. We hope that this toolkit has given you an understanding of ASN's work and answered your questions while providing you with inspiration and ideas.

If you have decided to fundraise for ASN we would really like to hear from you! Just email ASN on the contact details listed on page 4 of this toolkit.

If instead you would prefer to support us in other ways, any donations are desperately needed and gratefully received. We have attached a standing order form, with all the information on it for those who would like to donate to ASN.

Thank you for helping to support more women and best of luck for your fundraising!

The Abortion Support Network Team

*"I want everyone to know how helpful ASN was to us: they helped us with all our travel and my daughter was on the phone to them nearly every day. She found ASN so easy to talk to which she really needed at the time. We would both like to thank [the ASN host] for putting us up in her home and making us very welcome."*

**Mother of a 14 year old girl assisted by ASN**