

# THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO ORGANISING YOUR BOLLOCKS TO POVERTY EVENT

# BOLLOCKS TO POVERTY

doing it for  
actionaid

We want your Bollocks to Poverty event to be fantastic, so if this is your first time organising an event, this guide should really help. It's got a lot of information in but don't be put off – it's all quite straightforward common sense advice with links to resources and more help if you need it.

This guide covers the logistics of organising an event, but don't forget one of the biggest jobs is getting people there. We have a separate guide to promoting your event so make sure you look at that too!

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# TOP TIPS

**Keep these tips in your head at all times and everything should go smoothly.**

- Use the skills you have and people you know.
- Get people to help you wherever possible, as long as you trust them not to let you down.
- Always think about risk. Avoid paying upfront costs wherever possible, unless you are sure you will make enough money to cover them. Most people overestimate the amount of money they will raise at an event.
- Double check everything. Most problems arise because of communication problems.
- Start small, you can always do a big event next time when you have nailed this one.
- Don't be afraid to ask for favours and free stuff. Remember the old chestnut 'If you don't ask, you don't get.'

# TYPE OF EVENT

**Anything goes when deciding what kind of event you want to make part of the tour. If you can think of it then you can do it.**

Here are some of the most popular ones: club night / DJ competition / gig / battle of the bands / art or design exhibition / comedy night / film screening / pub karaoke / quiz night / cabaret / fashion show / 5-a-side football match / rugby tournament / college or uni RAG event/ yaD / skate comp / BBQ / pool competition.

The more complex your event, the more time, money and people you will need to plan and run it. Think about who you want to come to your event and if there is a demand for the type of event you have in mind. If it's for your friends or a particular group of people e.g. students, do something they will enjoy. If your friends all love live music, don't try and drag them to an art exhibition just because you like them.

# DATE

**Make sure you pick a date far enough away so you have time to plan, book and promote your event.**

We'd love to give you a definite time line of what to do and when, but because events can be so different in size and content it's really hard to do.

If the event involves booking bands, DJs or any other entertainment you will probably need a few months, especially if they are popular people with busy schedules. The same goes for popular local venues which are often booked up months in advance. However if you are organising a pub quiz or house party, you can usually get this together in less than a month.

Allow yourself plenty of time to promote the event. If you are running a gig or club night you will probably want to list it in magazines and websites. Normally the people who put these together will want your event info three weeks in advance. So you need to have your line-up, timings, venue and tickets all confirmed three weeks before.

Check for other big events happening on the same day as yours. Avoid clashes with big local gigs (if they are likely to appeal to the same audience) as well as cup finals and music festivals. If you are hoping to pull in students, avoid revision and exam season, although post exam parties are always popular.

# THE VENUE

**Okay so you've decided what type of event you want to put on and when. Now you need a venue.**

This can be anything from a local pub, club or village hall to your own flat. You will be more likely to know of a good venue local to you than we would. Think of places where events have taken place in the past. If you can get down to the venue for a few events before you book, (especially if you are planning a gig) that will really help you judge how your own event will go.

A full intimate venue looks much better than a half empty cavernous venue so be realistic. Only book a venue you think you can fill. Unusual venues (boats, shops, farms, beaches etc) often make interesting events but they are often a little harder to organise.

A great site listing loads of venues in the UK is...

[www.gig-guide.co.uk/pages/music-venues.php](http://www.gig-guide.co.uk/pages/music-venues.php)

## VIEWING A VENUE

**Once you have a venue in mind set up an appointment to visit it.** This is called a site visit and is conducted by a sales manager / pub landlord / event booker / vicar / headmaster – it all depends on the venue you choose!

Before you make an appointment, have a clear idea of what event you want to put on and some suggested dates. This will help to convince the venue that you know what your doing (even if you don't!) and you will be taken seriously. Make sure you tell them that you are doing it for ActionAid. If you don't feel very confident telling them all about what ActionAid does, direct them to our website for more information.

At the meeting you will want to find out the following:

- Capacity of venue. This differs between standing and seating so make sure you tell the venue what your requirements are.
- If the venue has a license for the activities you want to do, such as live music, serving alcohol.
- Opening and closing times as well as set up and break down times.
- What equipment is included and if you can bring your own e.g. audio, lighting, furniture
- If staff are provided, such as security, bar staff, cleaning staff.
- If you can bring your own food and drink.
- And most importantly venue costs.

Now for more detail about the above checklist. You should have thought about each of these aspects before you view a venue so that you can be sure it will work for your event.

### Your requirements

What you need to make your event work. Check that whatever your want to do can be done there! So if you're putting on a gig you will need somewhere with a stage or at least a space for a band, electricity points for guitars, microphones and speakers, and enough room for the crowd! It sounds obvious but it's easy to overlook these details and you don't want to discover problems on the day.

### Location

The location of the venue is really important – people won't travel miles out of town unless they are very committed and a rainy day could be enough to put people off. Also bear in mind the footfall outside. If you're putting on a night in a busy area you are likely to get people coming in off the street which could help boost your numbers. Think about transport links and how people can get to and from your event.

According to Mikee from London gig promoters Broccoli; *"Location of the venue is important- we've done gigs in remote places and it doesn't work. The layout, good stage and places to chill out are other factors - think about if you would want to spend time there."*

## Capacity

Decide how big you want your event to be. All venues have a capacity, which means the maximum amount of people it can legally hold. Capacities are determined by the available floor space, the number of fire exits and often by other considerations such as toilets!

## Timings

Decide when you will start and finish and check with the venue that your timings are ok. Venues will have set times when they open and close and you will have to fit around these. Then work out what time any entertainment will start and finish. If you have bands / DJs, check how long their set is (or tell them how long they can play for!). A general guide is 30 minutes for support bands and 45 – 60 minutes for a headline act.

## Set up and break down

Make sure you have enough time to set up for your event and remember you will have to take everything down afterwards. Check with the venue if you will need to do this at the end of the night or the next day.

## Equipment

If you need audio or visual equipment like amps, microphones, film screens or projectors, make sure you know what equipment is provided by the venue and what you need to bring or hire yourself. Also ask if they have technicians who will do set up and sound / lighting checks for you. Check with DJs and bands to see what equipment they need or what they can bring themselves.

David Phillips who is Head of Music at KOKO, says that *“the single most important thing when organising a live gig is that the venue has a big enough sound system for the space.”*

If you don't know where to start we'd recommend getting in touch with a specialist hire firm as they are the experts and can tell you everything you need to know.

## Sound and lighting hire

[www.saville.co.uk](http://www.saville.co.uk) (Branches all over UK)

[www.johnhenrys.com](http://www.johnhenrys.com) (Recommended for London)

Or just google 'audio visual hire' and your home town for local businesses.

## Furniture hire

[www.spaceworks.co.uk](http://www.spaceworks.co.uk) (Branches in London, Bristol, Dublin, delivers nationwide)

[www.thorns.co.uk](http://www.thorns.co.uk) (Branches in London, Birmingham and Manchester, delivers nationwide)

[www.beeventhire.co.uk](http://www.beeventhire.co.uk) (Based in the midlands, delivers nationwide)

Or google locally.

## Staff

Check if any staff are included with the venue hire. Your local pub or club usually include bar staff and security as their wages are covered by people buying alcohol. If you're hiring a village hall you might find that you need to provide bar staff.

If you are expecting large numbers of people and you think you might need a bit of extra crowd management, you could try professional companies such as Assist Security [www.assistsecurity.co.uk](http://www.assistsecurity.co.uk) or Showsec International [www.showsec.co.uk](http://www.showsec.co.uk). Make sure that any professional security person you hire has a valid, in date SIA badge. This is a legal requirement and if they don't have one, you could be in trouble for hiring them. If a security person turns up without a badge, send them home. When booking, make sure you have an out of hours emergency contact number to contact if they don't turn up.

It's always good to have a trained sound and/or lighting technician on site if this element is important to your event. Ask the venue if they can supply or recommend someone.

Mike Hamer, Operations Manager at KOKO, one of London's best live music venues, agrees. He believes a great gig *“is all about the music! And being surrounded by a team of energetic individuals who enjoy a shared passion for music, resulting in a good night turning into a great one.”*

## Food and drink

If you want food or drink at a venue find out if this is possible. They may insist on using their own bar and staff or recommended caterers (often at a highly inflated price), or they may allow you to bring your own food. If so, check if there is a kitchen and what facilities there are.

## Venue costs

Most importantly check out any venue costs before you commit. Some bars let you hold events for free if they can make money on drinks sold, although they may have a minimum amount that has to be spent at the bar. Persuade the venue that you are expecting a full house which will not only mean good beer sales but a busy venue which looks great to passers by.

If the venue has a flat fee for hiring, you can expect to pay anything from £50 for a back room in a pub to £2000 for a huge place like Koko in London. Always ask for that charity discount though! Make sure you there are no hidden costs, such as set up / break down fees, equipment hire or security staff fees.

# ENTERTAINING PEOPLE

**Now you have the date, venue and event idea in place, you need to make sure people have a good time.** For sports tournaments you need to get some teams signed up to take part, referees or judges, plus equipment like balls, nets, team bibs and a trophy. For art exhibitions and fashion shows you also need to get people committed to taking part, even if this means you and your mates. Make sure everyone involved knows the date, time and what they need to do before then.

Most other types of event involve some kind of live performance, whether that's a band, DJ, comedian, dancer or a combination of people. If you already have people lined up – great! If not, below are some good places to start looking.

Always try and get people to appear for free. Many BTP tour organisers have managed this in the past, whether it's local bands and amateur DJs or established artists like Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly., Revenue and Judge Jules. Offer to cover their expenses if you can (travel, refreshments, equipment hire) so that it doesn't end up costing them money though!

If you are paying the band or entertainer, make sure you get a signed contract from them. Most "working" bands will have a standard contract they send out. Check times and dates are correct and if there is anything they are expecting you to provide. Having a contract protects you if they pull out of the event.

## Bands

[www.gumtree.com](http://www.gumtree.com)

[www.hireaband.co.uk](http://www.hireaband.co.uk)

[www.gig-guide.co.uk/pages/bands.php](http://www.gig-guide.co.uk/pages/bands.php)

Also check out local pubs, record stores and music shops for flyers of local bands, or ask around. Try and get a band that comes recommended, although the best test is to see them live yourself. Don't go on demos or Myspace recordings alone as these can easily be produced to make the band sound better than they are!

## DJs

[www.thedjlist.com](http://www.thedjlist.com)

[www.book-djs.net](http://www.book-djs.net)

[www.djadvantage.com](http://www.djadvantage.com)

Finding a good DJ can be tricky as everyone calls themselves a DJ these days. If you are having a house party or low key gathering in a bar and just need some background music, someone who can keep the music going is all you need. If the DJ is the main focus of attention, make sure they can actually mix records together (nothing gets a crowd booing like a bad mix!) and have a record collection that matches your expectations.

## Karaoke

You can get a range of karaoke packages, from just hiring the equipment and running it yourself, to a full party with a compère and entertainers, even based on a theme like rock'n'roll. Google 'karaoke' or look in your local paper.

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## Comedians

[www.offthekerb.co.uk](http://www.offthekerb.co.uk)

[www.mirthcontrol.org.uk](http://www.mirthcontrol.org.uk)

You can either book a comedian through an agent like the ones above, or contact them direct through [www.chortle.co.uk](http://www.chortle.co.uk). Of course if you are organising a stand-up comedy night, you just need to convince a few friends to brave the spotlight.

## Extra entertainment

[www.ukstars.co.uk](http://www.ukstars.co.uk)

[www.contrabandevents.com](http://www.contrabandevents.com)

Everything from fairground rides to jugglers to tribute bands.

## Riders and dressing rooms

A rider is the term used to describe the refreshments given to bands and entertainers. When booking a bigger band they will often include what they want provided in their contract. A reasonable rider would include water, beer and food such as sandwiches and chocolate bars. Don't feel pressurised into giving a lot if you don't want to - after all it is a charity event, but do make at least water available to performers. If the venue can provide dressing rooms then fantastic. Make sure you check the availability of dressing rooms with the venue in advance so they can arrange access. If there are no dressing rooms, make sure the entertainers know before they get there.

# LEGAL STUFF

**When you are deciding on a venue make sure it has the right license for the activities you are planning and public liability insurance. You should also do a risk assessment.**

## LICENSES

You need a licence for certain activities at public events, such as selling alcohol or playing live music. If you have seen a similar event to yours taking place at the venue then it is normally safe to assume that they have a license to do this activity. For example if your local pub has held gigs there before then they should have a license for live music and retail of alcohol. You should always tell the venue exactly what you will be doing at your event so they can advise you if they have the correct licenses.

All these activities need a license so check with the venue if they are covered:

- retail sale of alcohol
- supply of alcohol to or on behalf of a club or when ordered by a club member
- supply of hot food or drink between 11pm and 5am the following morning
- provision of entertainment for profit, including charity, where the entertainment involves:
  - theatrical performance
  - film exhibition
  - indoor sporting event
  - boxing or wrestling (indoor or outdoor)
  - live music
  - recorded music
  - dance
  - provision of facilities for making music
  - provision of dancing facilities

If your event is outdoors or somewhere unusual, check with your local council and the police on the permissions /licenses you may require. If your event involves the sale of alcohol or public entertainment you may need a temporary events notice (TEN). Find out more about TENs and how to apply for one at [www.culture.gov.uk/what\\_we\\_do/alcohol\\_and\\_entertainment/4056.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/alcohol_and_entertainment/4056.aspx)

Make sure everything you do is within the law and speak to the venue if you have any questions. The venue will have specific rules about alcohol and who is allowed into the venue. This is very important if you would like under 18s to attend.

## INSURANCE

Public Liability Insurance is essential for public events and covers the organiser against claims from the public while attending your event. Most venues should have this in place but check this is the case. If not, you may need to get this arranged and it is quite expensive so you will have to factor this into your costs. The premium is often dependent upon the number of people attending your event. If you need insurance, try [www.eventsinsurance.co.uk](http://www.eventsinsurance.co.uk) for a quote.

## RISK ASSESSMENTS

Any good event organiser will carry out a risk assessment before their event. It's a lot simpler than it sounds and doesn't take long! It basically involves making a list of all the possible hazards at your event, scoring each one depending on your event and venue, and then seeing how if you can make changes to minimize the risk. Here is a template you can print off and use [www.hse.gov.uk/risk/template.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/template.pdf). To get you started, think about things like fire hazards, trip hazards, falling equipment, electrical equipment, overcrowding and intoxicated people.

## TICKETS

**First of all decide if you need to sell tickets or have free entry.** You might need to sell tickets to cover any costs of running your event, like venue hire, or if you are fundraising. Think about whether to sell them in advance or on the door. Selling in advance gives you an idea of how many people will be coming which is less stressful than hoping everyone will turn up on the day. If your venue has limited capacity remember to number the tickets and don't sell more than the venue can hold.

Make advance tickets slightly cheaper than door prices to encourage people to buy them. Be realistic with the price – people won't come if it is too much. Find out what other similar events charge and undercut them by a pound or two. Including a free drink or BTP badge with the ticket price is a good incentive too. The venue will usually sell advance tickets for you, and you can often find local businesses or groups who will agree to sell them. Just make sure you include all ticket outlets on any promotion.

On the tickets, remember to use the BTP logo supplied, and if some of the money from tickets is going to ActionAid, you need to state this clearly. Please also include the line 'ActionAid is a registered charity no. 274467'.

You can make your own tickets or order them from ticket printing companies like [www.secprint.co.uk](http://www.secprint.co.uk) or [www.hisecuritytickets.com](http://www.hisecuritytickets.com).

## FREEBIES

**Try and reduce your costs as much as possible by asking local businesses to give you help in kind.**

Aim to get as much as you can for free! Print shops can help with free or discounted flyers and posters in return for a name check at the bottom. When buying or hiring anything, make sure you ask for a charity discount. Theatres, cinemas, football clubs, beauty salons, record shops and other local businesses can support the event by donating prizes for any raffles or competitions you hold at the event. Spend a lot of time in your local curry house? Then why not ask them to donate a meal for two as a prize!

Good websites to get free stuff from:

[www.gumtree.co.uk](http://www.gumtree.co.uk)  
[www.uk.freecycle.org](http://www.uk.freecycle.org)

# ON THE NIGHT

**Make sure you leave plenty of time to set up and get people to help you, you can't run an event single handedly.** Think about jobs like putting up posters and banners, setting up audio visual equipment, introducing entertainment, selling tickets on the door, looking after collection tins, giving out BTP stickers and information, selling or giving out drinks and clearing up afterwards.

Before you open doors make sure you do all of the following:

- Introduce yourself to the venue manager, any security or other staff and all entertainers so they know who is organising the event!
- Walk around the venue to check there are no serious problems like overflowing toilets or a hole in the ceiling.
- Check all sound and lighting equipment is working early on. Don't leave it to the last minute to find out you've got no needles for your decks and the record shop is now closed.
- Brief any staff or helpers and make sure they know all about the event, what is happening when, and a bit about Bollocks to Poverty. Make sure they know opening and closing times and health and safety information like where the fire exits are.
- Put up banners, posters and layout freebies and money boxes if you are fundraising. Make sure everyone knows why they are there and how they are helping fight global poverty.
- Organise the front door by setting up a ticket desk if you are selling/collecting tickets. A hand stamp might be handy so you know who has paid.
- Take a deep breath, stay calm and try to enjoy yourself!

# AFTERWARDS

**We really hope you enjoy organising your Bollocks to Poverty event and realise what an amazing thing you are doing.** We can't stress how important it is that people like you are getting off the sofa and raising money and awareness all over the UK for us. As well as any actual pounds you send us which goes straight to the people we work with, the value of spreading the Bollocks to Poverty message is just as high.

The more people who have heard of Bollocks to Poverty and ActionAid, the more support we get from the public, and the easier it is to get people like politicians and decision makers to listen to us and support us. So first of all we want to say a massive **THANK YOU** to you.

When the event is over, you will definitely need a break. It's easy to pack up and move on to the next thing, but there are a few things you should do in the days after the event.

- Say thank you to everyone who helped you. This could be friends who helped you organise it, venues, entertainers, printers and suppliers who donated service or goods, media who gave you coverage, even the people who turned up and made it a success. All people need is a thank-you and to know that they helped do something worthwhile. They will also be more likely to help you out again in future.
- Bank any fundraised money (see the Fundraising guide) and sent a cheque to us along with banners if you borrowed them.
- Tell us about it! This is really valuable to us but very few people actually think of sending us photos and a few lines about the event. We genuinely love hearing about your events – it's inspiring and helps motivate us to keep on working hard. We need photos of Bollocks to Poverty events to inspire other people to do the same, and if you are up for writing a short blog about your event, we'll put it on the website too. Email everything to [bollocks@actionaid.org.uk](mailto:bollocks@actionaid.org.uk)

**Please note** that ActionAid does not endorse or have any partnerships with companies and websites listed in this guide. They are listed as examples of services you may require but please consider alternative companies for your event. They do not offer discounts or special deals to BTP event organisers and ActionAid cannot be held responsible for any business you choose to enter into with them.