



# Blind Veterans UK Success Story



## 100KM TREK - UK



# FACTBOX



CHALLENGE NAME	London to Brighton 100km
TYPE	Trek
DURATION	1 day
NO. IN GROUP	300 (average)
AGE GROUP	25 - 45



## CHALLENGE OVERVIEW

The route follows The Wandle Trail out of South West London and down through Surrey and Sussex, finishing at the Blind Veterans centre in Ovingdean, Brighton. Hot meals, drinks and snacks are provided at rest stops along the route.

This epic trek begins early, in Fulham before heading along the banks of the Thames and before winding in to more rural surroundings. The route then follows the Wandle Trail. After stopping at Oaks Park for the first refreshment stop, walkers make their way in to the North Downs and head towards Godstone. It is a lot more rural and picturesque here. This challenge takes participants through the night, in the Sussex countryside, down to Plumpton and the South Downs. The sea comes into view on approach to the finish line at the Blind Veterans UK centre in Ovingdean, where challengers are welcomed with food and drink to celebrate their achievement, together with a well earned massage!





## Why did Blind Veterans decide to embark on running their own Bespoke Fundraising Challenge?

Back in 2011, we wanted to organise our own fundraising challenge to enhance our existing events portfolio with the aim of attracting a younger demographic to support the charity. We knew we needed a unique event to stand out amongst the many charity challenges on offer and thought an endurance walk from London to Brighton would be a good fit.

It's a great advantage having our own centre overlooking the sea in Ovingdean, Brighton, so this provided the perfect finish for the challenge. Also, with a bespoke event, you can tailor it to your own specification and make it as big or small as you like. It's such a special event as our beneficiaries also take part and this really gives our participants a boost on the day, making for great camaraderie!

## Why did you choose Discover Adventure for to deliver your London to Brighton 100km trek?

We chose Discover Adventure as they have a reputation for being a reliable and trustworthy tour operator with extensive experience in organising charity challenges. We've found them an absolute pleasure to work with in both the lead up to the event and during the event itself which no doubt helped the event to run as smoothly as possible and improve participant experience.

We feel that our 100k is the best as the support we provide participants along the route is unrivalled and with DA's support, the event continues to grow. In 2016, we introduced a second 100k in Yorkshire which has proved to be really popular.

## What are the three key elements that you feel has made this so successful?

- 1. The event has been a priority across the charity** so having everyone back it has been so important. From the staff team taking part, to our centres across the country helping to promote it, everyone has contributed towards its success.
- 2. Having a presence on social media** – as we know social media is huge and it's almost impossible to organise a successful fundraising event without this. From Facebook to Twitter and Instagram, we've kept our content fresh and provided regular updates to our audience.
- 3. Trialling new marketing activity**, being creative with the budget and not being afraid of taking risks has helped us to compete in a saturated market – not everything has always worked but we have learnt from that and moved forwards.

# The Interview

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**Approximately what percentage of your fundraisers return to complete the challenge year on year?**

Around a third are repeat participants with a handful taking part in every challenge since it started in 2011! We hear from some previous walkers that they want to come back and beat their finish time from before which appeals to those with a competitive nature.

**How do you think you have managed to maintain your fundraisers (and sponsors) enthusiasm?**

Having Blind Veterans UK employees be so enthusiastic and involved in the walk hopefully inspires our fundraisers to want to raise as much sponsorship money as they can and be a part of our event. We try to engage with our participants as much as possible, motivating them to keep training during the long winter months and look forward to the challenge ahead. We keep them updated with any developments with the events such as announcing the route and the 100k t-shirts arriving at the office to keep the momentum going right up until the big day itself.

**How do you support your fundraisers regarding gaining sponsorship and keep them engaged during the long lead up to the challenge?**

We have a comprehensive supporter journey strategy that starts from the moment the participant has registered until they have finished fundraising and are sent a certificate congratulating and thanking them.

We send monthly e-newsletters with lots of fundraising and training tips and beneficiary case studies. We set-up a 100k Facebook group for walkers to chat amongst themselves and the events team are always here to deal with any queries or fundraising material requests as well as featured participant or our events team blogs.

We tailor communications according to how each participant is getting on with their fundraising and pay special attention to the ones who need more support as well as showing our huge thanks to our top fundraisers with incentives and share their stories with the aim of inspiring other participants.

# The Outcomes



What do your bespoke challenges generate on average in fundraising each year?

Bespoke challenges make up around a third to half of our events income, our 100k London to Brighton event alone can raise in excess of £150k which is a really significant amount for a charity of our size.

**TOTAL FUNDRAISING – £150,000 per event**

What do you value about running your challenges through Discover Adventure?

The support in the lead up to event, and the event itself, from DA is immeasurable, they are always at the other end of the line when we need them and work so efficiently. They are so flexible in responding to any changes to the route we have requested and their enthusiasm during the event weekend has been infectious and definitely makes it a really positive experience for everyone involved.



We believe that going above and beyond to make a difference to the life of another, and fulfilling a lifetime goal, are things that everyone should have the opportunity to do.

Keen to discuss your own plans?

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