

# Charities

## Information Sheet

### Red Nose Day

Comic Relief was started in 1985 by scriptwriter Richard Curtis and comedian Lenny Henry when they saw the suffering of the people in Ethiopia during a big famine. The first Red Nose Day took place in 1988 and included over 150 celebrities and comedians, raising over £15 million. Red Nose Day now happens every two years and raises money for projects helping people in the UK and across the world.

The huge success of Comic Relief is arguably down to its partnerships with the likes of BT, Oxfam, Sainsbury's, BBC, TK Maxx and British Airways. Even J.K. Rowling stepped in to write two Harry Potter books exclusively to raise money for Comic Relief!

[www.comicrelief.com/rednoseday](http://www.comicrelief.com/rednoseday)



### Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan was founded by Douglas Macmillan MBE who, after being devastated by the death of his father from cancer, set up the Society for the Prevention and Relief of Cancer in 1912. He wanted to see homes for cancer patients where they could get special treatment at very low cost, and groups of nurses who could visit patients in their own home and provide comfort and relief. This was long before the NHS existed and so this kind of care was not available.

The Society for the Prevention and Relief of Cancer grew and is known today as the charity Macmillan Cancer Support. In 2014, supporters raised over £215 million for the charity by completing fundraising challenges and donating.

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



### WaterAid

WaterAid is an international non-profit organisation that was set up in 1981. It was set up by the UK water industry, in response to a conference called 'Thirsty Third World Conference' which looked at how many people across the world struggled to find clean water to drink and wash with.

Since then, WaterAid has helped millions of people in many different countries gain access to clean water, and helped to promote safe hygiene practices. The organisation also works to influence government water and sanitation policies to serve the interests of vulnerable people.

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



## Samaritans

The Samaritans was founded by Anglican Priest Chad Varah in 1953. He set up the charity after he had to lead a funeral for a 14 year old girl who had committed suicide. He believed there should be an emergency number that people could call if they were in distress or suicidal.

People started to offer to help him by sitting with clients and answering the phones, and it soon became clear that these volunteers and 'listening ears' were having a positive effect on the people talking to them. The simple act of listening and offering non-judgmental support was enough for most callers, and the service was providing a safe space for people to talk and be listened to.

Now over 21,000 volunteers answer phones and support people who are feeling depressed or suicidal throughout the UK and Ireland.

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

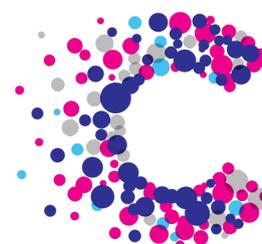


## Cancer Research UK

In 1995, Sally Tweddle and Nick James founded CancerHelpUK, a website that provided information about cancer to those who were suffering from it, as well as their friends and relatives. Sally Tweddle was motivated by her husband's experience of cancer, and how difficult it was to find cancer information on the internet. In the beginning it was hosted on the Medical School server at the University of Birmingham, but soon The Cancer Research Campaign and the Imperial Cancer Research Fund merged to form Cancer Research UK and they took over the management of it.

Today, Cancer Research UK funds scientists and Doctors to research cures, and helps governments make decisions about cancer policies. Every year millions of women from across the country come together to take part in Race for Life, which is organised by Cancer Research UK, and have so far raised over £547 million.

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)



CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK

## PDSA

In 1917, the very first PDSA Pet Clinic opened in a cellar in Whitechapel, in London. Its founder, Maria Dickin, was moved by the sight of sick animals and their owners who could not afford to treat them. She knew how important animals were to these people, but she did not want the animals to suffer for their owners' lack of money. So she set up clinics across the UK – including a travelling clinic in an old horse drawn caravan – and provided free vet treatment to animals.

Now, PDSA has 51 Pet Hospitals and more than 380 Pet Practices which provide 2.7 million veterinary treatments. It helps over 470,000 much-loved pets and brings peace of mind to 300,000 owners.

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

