TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

ROYAL MARSDEN SOUTH DOWNS TREK UK

Sat 01 May - Sat 01 May 2027





In aid of Royal Marsden Cancer Charity

01 May - 01 May 2027

1 DAYS | UK | TOUGH

This incredible coastal trek starts just outside Brighton and takes you on 42km of testing, undulating terrain before finishing in Eastbourne.

You will cross Firle Beacon, for stunning views of the coast, before tackling the incredible stretch of clifftops known as the Seven Sisters to finish on the seafront at Eastbourne.

- 42km marathon trek along the stunning South Downs
- Fully supported trekking challenge
- Stunning views from the high point of Firle Beacon
- Test your endurance with the undulating terrain of the Seven Sisters Country Park

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Sat 01 May*

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Challenge Day!

Pit yourself against one of the toughest challenges that the UK has to offer, as you take on a 42km trek along a remote section of the South Downs National Trail. Set against the dramatic backdrop of the South Downs National Park you will put mind and body through the ultimate test, as you tackle this serious endurance challenge. Walking this route is a serious undertaking.

Your challenge will start just outside Brighton and from here you will begin to make your way to Eastbourne along the South Downs Way.

During the challenge, you will be led by our experienced support leaders who will be there to motivate and support you along the way.

The route follows the South Downs Way and begins by heading east towards the tough climb up on to the top of Firle Beacon. From this vantage point you will have fantastic views of the surrounding area before descending down to the village of Alfriston. From here you follow the Cuckmere river to the sea before your final section takes you along the cliff tops of the Seven Sisters to the finish.

Not for the faint-hearted, this is a tough endurance challenge and should not be undertaken lightly, however, the sense of achievement is tremendous. The terrain is extremely varied and anyone undertaking this challenge should be comfortable walking similar distances.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.
The costs below are per person.

SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £45.00 when you book
Then a balance of £125.00
(5 weeks before your challenge)
Raise as much as you can for your charity.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £45.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £260.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Members only benefits and discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Needs, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, The Altitude Centre, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.
- Sponsorship forms
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Public liability insurance
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Fitness training notes
- Fundraising advice
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)

On your challenge

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- All challenge management before, during and post event
- Packed lunch and drinks
- Checkpoint snacks and drinks
- Charity Challenge buff, medal and certificate
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Travel to and from the challenge start/finish point
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

On your challenge

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- Evening Meals
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Breakfast before the challenge

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines	You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 7 weeks before departure (by 13/03/2027), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 29/05/2027). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.
Raising the sponsorship	We are here to help you throughout your fundraising and training journey. We will supply you with fundraising materials including supporter t-shirts. We will also provide any relevant training advice along with kit lists.
Typical group size	The typical group size is 100 - 150 participants

Why book with Charity Challenge?

- We are a multi-award winning challenge events specialist with over two decades of professional experience organising and leading challenges worldwide
- High quality route design that incorporates major landmarks and undiscovered highlights
- Fully supported walking challenge. Checkpoints, walking leaders and support vehicle.
- The very best leaders, who are fully qualified, highly experienced, knowledgeable and fun. They will do everything to help you complete the challenge and have a great time doing it!
- Thorough safety management systems in place (Challenge Safe)
- Medal at the finish
- The very highest quality South Downs Challenge on the market!

Level of Difficulty

The South Downs challenge is graded as tough. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, who have taken part in other trekking challenges and now wish to test themselves in a slightly tougher environment. You can tell your supporters that on your Trek South Downs Challenge you will be:

- Completing a marathon distance of 42km
- Trekking a full day on the varied and undulating terrain of the South Downs National Trail
- Ascending nearly 1000m across the whole route

Training

This is a long, sustained challenge of up to 12 hours and covers varied terrain. It requires a good to high level of fitness and you should not underestimate the importance of training beforehand. Even if you are active and exercise regularly, it's good to adapt your training towards your chosen challenge. This is vital in building strength, cardiovascular stamina and muscle endurance for the endurance challenge ahead.

We recommend you start training as early as possible, ideally at least 4-6 months before your challenge. Make sure you check the distance, ascent and terrain of your challenge and create a training plan that builds up to this. Whilst you could start with short walks in your local area, it's important to build up towards walking the distance of your actual challenge and being out and active for several hours at a time. Make sure you also check the type of terrain your challenge will take place in and plan your training to include similar terrain. Whilst an hour in the gym can help, you should ideally be training in a similar environment to that of your actual challenge and for several hours at a time.

As this challenge involves steep terrain on hills and along the coast, make sure you have training days that include similarly steep sections. Building up the muscles for both ascents and descents is important and can make all the difference in enjoying your final challenge. It is normal for knees to ache when building these muscles up and we would highly recommend training with walking poles to help ease the pressure on your knees. Make sure you set up your walking poles so they're a good length for you first – most outdoor stores will be able to advise on this and there are plenty of tutorials available online.

Training with the kit you will be using on your challenge is important so you can test it out beforehand and make sure it's fit for purpose. This includes wearing in any walking boots or shoes and experimenting with the socks you wear so you don't get blisters on your challenge. Make sure you also get used to walking with a backpack with at least 2 litres of water in. It's very important to test out your waterproofs (both jacket and trousers) in the rain as there's nothing worse than finding out your waterproofs leak 2 hours into your 12 hour challenge!

A healthy balanced diet is as important as your physical training. Make sure you fuel up on energy giving carbohydrates and muscle-repairing proteins before a long training session and test out the snacks you plan to take on your challenge as you walk. Not everyone gets on with energy gels, but most people can benefit from a slow energy release banana or a quick sugar hit from a jelly baby!

We provide plenty of additional information and guidance in your personalised login area, including warm up, stretching, cardiovascular training, exercise intensity, cross training, resistance (weight) training, cool down and the hazards of over-training.

Group Size

Our minimum group size is 20 and groups are typically made up of between 20-50 people. There will be one challenge leader for approximately every 10-15 participants.

On occasion, we may be able to run a challenge with less than 20 people. This may incur a small group supplement. If this happens, it will be communicated before your invoice or fundraising deadline.

Group Management

This is a leader-led challenge and you will be accompanied by our challenge leaders at all times.

We employ experienced and fully qualified challenge leaders to accompany and lead you. The leaders are first aid qualified and have extensive experience in leading challenges throughout the UK. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. They will be carrying full safety equipment and first aid kits with them at all times.

This challenge is designed and run as a team event and we encourage everyone taking part to support each other throughout the trek. This challenge is not designed as a race for individuals.

Partway into the challenge you will have begun to spread-out into your natural walking speeds. For larger groups, once you reach the first ‘checkpoint’ you may be allocated into a small group and designated a walking leader. These leaders will then be responsible for your safety. If you have any problems or need to join a faster or slower moving group, then please speak to your leader.

If you wish to walk together with friends, colleagues, family etc then this is no problem. Please just ensure that you all keep together and reach the checkpoint at the same time so that we can ensure you all get allocated together.

Your leaders will be aware of several important cut-off times at locations that we need people to reach by a certain time so the group can complete the challenge. Your leaders will manage the group pace and keep you informed about these and your options if they think you might be struggling to achieve these times. We ask everyone to respect the leaders decisions. They are made with the group’s safety in mind.

Please note that this route will not be marked by event arrows, nor is the event designed as an event for individuals to race. It is designed to be a team event, with like-minded people, all raising money for charity, supporting each other throughout the challenge.

Weather

Weather, safety and decision-making

The weather in the UK can be unpredictable, particularly in mountainous and exposed areas. Charity Challenge plans for adverse weather on all UK challenges and closely monitors forecasts in the lead-up to, and during, each event.

We use the **Met Office weather warning system**, alongside specialist forecasts where appropriate (such as mountain weather forecasts), and live assessments by our experienced Event Managers and challenge leaders.

How we use Met Office weather warnings

- **Yellow weather warnings indicate that conditions may be challenging. Events will usually go ahead, with leaders managing conditions on the day and making adjustments where required. Rain alone rarely results in changes to our challenges.**
- **Amber weather warnings indicate a higher likelihood of severe weather and increased risk. This may result in significant route changes, altered timings or, in rare cases, postponement or cancellation if safety cannot be assured.**
- **Red weather warnings indicate dangerous conditions and events will not proceed.**

Where thunder and lightning are forecast or observed, we follow a strict safety protocol. Challenges will not begin, or will end immediately, until it is safe to proceed.

How decisions are made

All weather-related decisions are made by Charity Challenge's **Event Manager in consultation with the leadership team**, using forecast information and real-time conditions on the ground. Participant safety is always the overriding priority, and leaders' decisions on the day are final.

Decisions around route changes, delays, early finishes or cancellation are based on the **expected weather conditions at the challenge location and along the event itinerary**.

Challenges will **not** be cancelled, postponed, or refunded solely due to severe weather warnings in a participant's local area or place of departure if conditions at the challenge location allow the event to proceed safely.

Unless Charity Challenge cancels or postpones an event, refunds or transfers are not available due to weather or travel disruption, in line with our terms and conditions.

Terrain

Despite its location in the UK, the difficulty of this trek should not be underestimated as it includes one long day of hiking, with tough ascents and descents. The route is on good paths, but it's the variation of terrain that makes this challenge a unique and fun experience. In particular, terrain along the cliff tops of the Seven Sisters Country Park can be loose and rocky, and the ascents and descents here are short but steep.

Challenge Timings

Precise arrival times and instructions will be sent out 1 month prior to the challenge.

Your challenge begins early in the morning and you will need to arrive at the registration point just outside Brighton for 6.30am in order to maximise the time available to complete the challenge. When you arrive you will meet your support team and listen to the safety briefing. We will aim to begin trekking at 7am.

We expect people to be trekking for approximately 10-12 hours. Delays can happen, and the return time will all depend on the speed that you walk, so please do try and book flexible return arrangements.

At the finish, you can get public transport from Eastbourne back to the start point or onwards route.

Getting to and from the Challenge

The event registration point will be just outside Brighton at the Marine Cliffs car park in Rottingdean.

The event finishes at the Wish Tower on Eastbourne seafront. Public transport is available from Eastbourne, including the Coaster bus that you can take back to Rottingdean if you left your car there.

Please note: We will send you precise instructions about how to get to the registration point, and the timings of the event, one month prior to the challenge. We reserve the right to use alternative registration points and finishing points when necessary.

Accommodation

No accommodation is provided for this challenge.

Both Brighton and Eastbourne have an abundance of accommodation options.

Food & Drink

The following meals are included in the cost of this challenge:

- A packed lunch will be available to you during the day. This usually consists of a sandwich, fruit, crisps and a snack bar.
- At each checkpoint there will be water and checkpoint snacks available. These typically include a piece of fruit, crisps and chocolate/cereal bar per person per day.

We advise you to bring enough bottles to ensure you have 2 litres of water on you at all times. We would encourage you to also bring some of your own preferred snacks to keep you going during the challenge.

Please ensure you have had a substantial breakfast before arriving and that you arrive with your water bottles already filled.

If you have a severe allergy or dietary need, such as a severe nut allergy, please ensure you provide as much detail as

possible about this when booking on the challenge (e.g. whether you need an epipen, whether it is an airborne allergy or not etc). If you have informed us of any allergies or special dietary needs as part of the challenge booking process, we will endeavour to ensure appropriate meals and checkpoint snacks are available to you. However, we would encourage you to also bring your own favourite snacks with you to ensure your energy levels stay topped up throughout the challenge. Please be aware that it may not always be possible for us to cater to special dietary or allergy needs – we will get in touch if this is the case.

Clothing & Equipment

This is a tough challenge and to give yourself the best chance of successfully completing it please make sure that you have consulted the kit list carefully and that you have all kit marked as essential. No spare kit will be provided on the challenge.

Footwear

The most appropriate footwear for this challenge is a pair of walking boots. Walking boots provide more ankle support than shoes and can help protect you from ankle twists and sprains. They also have much better grip than your average sports trainer. Boots generally have stiffer soles that can better protect your feet from rough and rocky terrain, providing more comfort when you're walking on uneven terrain for any length of time. In bad weather, walking boots can also keep your feet drier and warmer.

Many people prefer to wear a trail shoe instead of boots as they find that they are lighter and more comfortable. Trail shoes are fine to wear, but please make sure that they have good grip on the soles. Sports trainers are not appropriate on any of our non-urban challenges.

It is important to wear footwear that is the right fit for your particular feet. We recommend seeking advice from your local outdoor retailer and trying several different brands and models out to find the pair that you find most comfortable. Remember to check how waterproof they are. It is particularly important that you make sure that your footwear is well worn in, that you have tested them out with suitable walking socks and that you have any blister plasters that you may need.

Waterproofs

As the weather can change quickly in the UK, it is important to make sure that you bring an appropriate waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers. Make sure you test these out before your challenge to check they can keep you dry for 10-12 hours at a time – you don't want to find out your waterproof jacket is too thin partway into your challenge!

Walking Poles

We highly recommend bringing walking poles to help you look after tired knees on steep ascents and descents. Your leaders will be happy to show you how to use them on the challenge, or you can check online in advance for videos on how to set them up for your height and the best way to use them.

Personal First Aid

Your leaders will carry an appropriate group first aid kit on the challenge, but it is a good idea to bring personal first aid

items along for yourself. These may include blister plasters or physio tape, any personal medication and any knee or ankle supports. If you carry an epipen, please make sure you bring two and that your leaders know where they are kept.

You will also need to consider bringing clothing and kit appropriate to the weather on the day of your challenge. Remember that the weather and temperature on the coastline can vary significantly from that inland. This may mean bringing hats and gloves as well as extra layers to keep you warm. Or it may mean bringing a sunhat, suncream and extra water. On some challenges, it will mean bringing kit for all weathers!

Please click here for a full kit list for this challenge. As a Charity Challenge participant, you will get members only benefits and/or discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.

Please be aware that because of the environment that this challenge takes place in our leaders may ask to see the vital parts of your kit. Participants found without kit marked on the kit list as essential may not be allowed to take part in the challenge.

Toilets

Toilet facilities are limited on this route. You will be made of aware of designated toilet points by your walking leaders.

Where public toilets are not available then toileting is available in the great outdoors! Please make sure to follow the countryside code and take all litter, including tissues and toilet paper, home with you.

Money

During the challenge, there are limited opportunities to spend any money. You will pass through a small village with a shop. We would advise you should need no more than £20.00, excluding your joining and returning home travel costs.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up ‘Challenge Safe’, one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. ‘Challenge Safe’ formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount!

Here are a few important points that you should be aware of:

- The terrain along the Seven Sisters can be muddy and therefore slippery. Please ensure you wear footwear with good grip.
- The coastal path is unfenced and the clifftops are subject to constant erosion. Please be mindful to keep away from the edges and follow your leaders instructions.
- Walking a marathon distance means you will be walking for approximately 10-12 hours so you should ensure

your training has been tailored towards this

Emergencies

Your leadership team is trained to deal with emergency situations in remote areas and will be carrying mobile phones and radios in case the emergency services need to be contacted. The event is not run as a race and you will never be encouraged to walk at a pace 'beyond your ability'. There will always be a wide variety in people's walking abilities which will be carefully managed by the leader team. This team will keep the group together for maximum safety and set a sensible pace for all to achieve this challenge within the planned time frame. Should you find yourself unable to continue for any reason, then our support team, including our support vehicle, will be able to assist you coming off the challenge. Emergencies will be coordinated with the local rescue service.

Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

We do not professionally vet your medical details. Please assess for yourself whether you are fit and able to take on the challenge. Please review the detailed Trip Notes and itinerary to get a better idea of what is involved. Please speak to your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns about taking part. If you suffer from a severe allergy, you are required to contact us to discuss any requirements. If you think that there are things we can do to make the challenge more accessible/comfortable for you, it is your responsibility to let us know, and we will then let you know if we can accommodate your request. Whilst we will do our best to put in place appropriate measures we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Medical Support

First Aid qualified staff will be provided with the medical details that you give on your booking form but please note that they are on the challenge to support with medical matters related to the challenge environment and terrain itself, i.e. heat/cold and so on. They will deal with any incidents and accidents (cuts, sprains, breaks and so on). They are not intended to continue any ongoing specialist medical care that you receive in the UK for pre-existing medical conditions, and should not be assumed to have any professional experience of your specific medical condition.

If you have any specific needs around pre-existing medical conditions, you should discuss these with your family doctor or specialist in advance and then discuss any advice given by them with the challenge leader.

Insurance

We don't offer insurance for our UK trips, as any medical emergencies would naturally be covered through the NHS. Therefore, the main thing that you will not be covered for is cancellation. You can see our cancellation policy within our terms and conditions here. If you wish, you could look into your own policy that covers cancellation for travel within the UK.

Responsible Tourism

Charity Challenge believes that all of its challenges, whether in the UK or overseas, should have a positive impact on

the communities we visit. We are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism and always aim to make sure that we minimise our impact on the local environment.

You can help us to achieve this goal by:

- Adopting a policy of 'leave no trace'. You can read more about this here.
- Taking all litter off the trek with you, including fruit peels and skins.
- Using public toilets when available and taking any tissues from 'wild wees' home with you.
- Stick to the footpaths at all times and avoid walking on their edges, to help prevent erosion from spreading.
- Only using the car park(s) designated for your event, and not parking on the local streets.
- Keeping noise to a minimum when passing houses in residential areas.
- Leaving rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them. Please don't take these home with you.
- Avoid transporting and introducing invasive species by cleaning your outdoor gear regularly.
- Contributing to the local economy by paying for parking, staying an additional night in the local area or enjoying a local meal out.
- Being patient and understanding if at points you have to wait or slow down due to others being on the same path.

We ask you to think carefully about any memorial type activities you may plan for your challenge. We fully appreciate the emotional importance our challenges have for many of our participants and encourage you to mark that special moment in your own way, whilst ensuring that the natural beauty and protection of the environment you're in is maintained. Leaving photos or other memorabilia or writing on stones is contrary to the leave no trace principle. Remember: 'Take only memories, leave only footprints'.

For more details about our responsible tourism policy then please click here.

CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

Any more questions?

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