How did you engage your supporters with the campaign? What creative marketing approaches did you use?

We had four key aims for the Big Give Christmas Challenge:

- To engage our existing supporter group to make a donation
- To recruit new individual donors
- Encourage corporate sponsorship
- To increase online donations – driving donations through social media and our e-newsletter

These aims influenced the way that we approached the Christmas Challenge and the type of promotional activities we planned. We used a wide variety of online and offline media to engage both existing supporters and new donors with the campaign.

Our marketing activity for the Big Give Challenge began in September 2017 when we were selected for funding by our Champion, The Hospital Saturday Fund. We scheduled several activities in the three months leading up to the Christmas Challenge, with the focus on the fortnight leading up to the Christmas Challenge as well as Christmas Challenge week itself.

**Engaging our pledgers**

We made a decision to approach local companies to pledge the funds towards the Christmas Challenge as opposed to individual donors or trusts. The reason for this is that companies are keen to publicise their own charitable activities and by partnering with them in this way, we would gain additional publicity through each company’s own PR and Marketing activities. This proved to be hugely successful with at least one company gaining their own press coverage about their support.

Companies were also encouraged to share the campaign with their staff, clients, and suppliers, and get them engaged with the fundraising and this helped us to increase our reach even further. We provided them with postcards to hand out as well as suggested wording for an email to send to these groups.

**Promotional materials**

We had 1,000 A6 postcards produced to publicise the campaign. The postcards featured the logos of our pledgers and our Big Give Champion. These were distributed to each of the companies who had pledged their support, and they were included with our Christmas Newsletter and handed out at events.
Social media
We were keen to promote the campaign heavily on social media – this helped to reach our existing followers, and we also encouraged them to share the campaign with their friends and family, enabling us to reach new groups too.

In order to do this we came up with the idea of the Big Give Christmas Challenge Countdown. In the eleven days leading up to the Christmas Challenge we posted an image each day. Each photo featured a number representing the number of days until the Christmas Challenge began. We know that our social media followers respond best to images/video of the young people we support, so we were keen to involve our beneficiaries in the countdown as much as possible.

Young people of all ages from across the charity helped to produce numbers from eleven down to one and photos of them with their numbers were posted on social media throughout the week. This really helped with the sharing element of the campaign, as parents were particularly keen to share images featuring their own child with their friends and family.

We also encouraged our corporate pledgers to submit a number for our countdown. We tagged their company in the posts and encouraged them to share the posts on their own social media pages.

The countdown gave us a tool for posting about the Big Give Christmas Challenge for 11 consecutive days. It ensured that we had new and engaging content to use each day, whilst keeping the core messaging the same on each post.

From the beginning of the Countdown, which started on Friday 17th November, we made 36 posts on Facebook about The Big Give Christmas Challenge. On average each post reached 750 people. The posts were clicked 1,920 times and received 954 “likes”, “comments” and “shares”.

Newsletter & E-Newsletter
When we put together our marketing plan for The Big Give Christmas Challenge, we decided that our existing supporter communications would be key to promoting the campaign. So we brought our Christmas Newsletter forward so that this would hit doormats during Christmas Challenge week.

Our e-newsletter focussed solely on promoting the Big Give Christmas Challenge and was scheduled to go out at Midday on Tuesday 28th November when the campaign went live.

A follow-up email was sent on Monday, 4th December to thank all those who donated and to remind those that hadn’t donated that they only had 24 hours left to do so. Both emails prompted donations - people who received the e-newsletter and clicked the link to the Big Give website donated a total of £1,473.60 making it our most successful email campaign to date by some way.
Events
During Christmas Challenge week we were fortunate to have been the beneficiary of two fundraising events and were therefore able to hand out postcards and promote the campaign to new donors at these events. We know that a number of people were prompted to donate as a result of hearing about the campaign in this way, so it was a welcome boost to our other planned marketing activities.

Results
As a small local charity based in Sussex, we had a relatively modest target of £10,000. As it was the first time we have taken part in the Christmas Challenge for a number of years, we wanted to be realistic about what we could raise. We were thrilled with the final total of £11,188, exceeding our original target by 11%. A total of 34 online donations were made during the week ranging in value from £5 up to £1,000. The average donation value was £182.01.

More than 53% of donations were made by new donors - people who have never given before - and in some cases from people who were not previously known to us. We had donors from all over the UK including Derbyshire, Liverpool and Lancashire, and even someone from Florida donated to the appeal.

As a small charity supporting children and young people predominantly from the Home Counties, this proves that the campaign reached people beyond our immediate supporter network and suggests that promoting the campaign via social media, and asking our supporters to “share” the campaign was successful in reaching new individuals.