

Supporter Guidance: Public collections

Legal, open, honest and respectful

Public collections, where money is collected in a public place using buckets, tins, or contactless devices, are highly regulated to ensure funds are handled legally, ethically, and securely.

All public collection activity must comply with the **Fundraising Regulator** (FR) (via the Code of Fundraising Practice) and relevant local licensing laws (governed by **your Local Authority**).

When conducting a collection in aid of Acorns, all supporters must ensure the activity is: **legal, open, honest and respectful**.

Statutory collections (public streets and places)

This applies to collections held on public thoroughfares, pavements or areas that the public has unrestricted access to without payment (e.g. car parks, some shopping precincts).

Requirement	Details
Permit/licence	In most cases, collections on public streets or public places require a permit or authorisation from the relevant local authority. Requirements vary by location.
Application time	Applications must be made well in advance (often 1-3 months). Permits are date-specific and location-specific.
Collector age	To help ensure the safety and wellbeing of fundraisers, Acorns recommends that collectors to be aged 18 or over. Young people aged 16 or 17 who participate in a collection should be accompanied and appropriately supervised by a responsible adult aged 18 or over. Additional age restrictions may apply where specified by the local authority, venue owner, or permit conditions.
Collector conduct	Collectors must remain stationary, not cause obstruction and must not shake the collection container. Collectors must not pressure members of the public to donate and should be particularly mindful of people who may be in vulnerable circumstances.
Separation rule	Collectors must comply with any spacing requirements specified by the local authority permit.

Key action for supporters: Contact the relevant Local Authority's Licensing team or the Acorns Fundraising team immediately to start the application process and obtain a Letter of Authority from Acorns.

Collections on private property (supermarkets/stations)

Collections conducted entirely on private land (e.g., inside a supermarket, a privately managed shopping centre, or a train station concourse) do not require a Street Collection Permit from the council.

Requirement	Details
Permission	MANDATORY. You must obtain written permission from the property owner, manager, or controlling body (e.g. supermarket head office, Network Rail).
Timing	You must strictly adhere to the dates, times, and specific areas agreed upon in the written permission.
Official documents	You must carry the written permission on the day and be ready to present it to staff upon request.
Static vs. active	Static collection boxes placed inside premises only require the manager's permission (not a permit).

Mandatory collector and equipment standards

To ensure the safety of our collectors and the security of donations, these rules must be followed:

Standard	Requirement
Authorisation	Collectors must carry any authority documents, permits, badges or identification required by the local authority, venue owner or Acorns.
Collection containers	Buckets/tins must be securely sealed (e.g. tamper-proof label) and display the full name of the charity (Acorns Children's Hospice) and the registered charity number.
Transparency	Collectors must be open, honest, and immediately place all cash donations directly into the sealed collecting box.
ID Badge	While volunteer collectors do not always require ID badges under the Code, Acorns strongly recommends that all collectors display identification where practical.

Financial procedures and security (cash handling)

Acorns has strict procedures for handling and accounting for all funds raised:

Procedure	Detail
Cash handling	When your fundraising is complete, please pay the funds you have raised to Acorns using one of the following methods: pay online, pay at an Acorns shop or your local Acorns Children's Hospice, or pay directly into our bank account by bank transfer or using a paying-in slip.
Banking	All money collected must be bagged and banked into the Acorns account as soon as possible, ideally within two working days of the collection.
Expenses	Do not deduct any expenses (like travel costs) from the cash collected. All money must be banked gross, and expenses claimed separately (if applicable).
Safety	Unsecured cash should never be left unattended. If challenged, hand over the cash without resistance and immediately report the incident to the police and the Acorns Fundraising team.

Supporter checklist

Check	Public street/place (licence required)	Private property (permission required)
Permit	Yes (local council)	No (owner/manager permission instead)
Written permission	No (permit covers this)	Yes (from owner/manager)
Minimum collector age	18+ or 16+ if accompanied by an adult 18+	18+ or 16+ if accompanied by an adult 18+
Cash handling	To be bagged and sealed post event and paid to Acorns using one of the following methods: pay online, pay at an Acorns shop or your local Acorns Children's Hospice, or pay directly into our bank account by bank transfer or using a paying-in slip.	

Paying in your fundraising

Thank you for supporting Acorns Children's Hospice. When your fundraising is complete, please pay the funds you have raised using one of the following methods.

Option 1: Pay online

You can pay your fundraising online via the Acorns website. When making your donation, please select the option "I am paying in money that I have fundraised" where prompted. This helps us identify your payment as fundraising income.

Option 2: Pay at an Acorns shop or hospice

You can pay your fundraising at any Acorns shop or your local Acorns Children's Hospice. A member of the team will process your donation and arrange for it to be banked.

Option 3: Pay into our bank account

If you would prefer to pay your fundraising directly into our bank account, you can do so by bank transfer or by using a paying-in slip at your local bank.

Please contact the Supporter Services team to request our bank details or a paying-in slip. You will also be provided with a unique reference number, which should be used when making your payment. This helps us identify your fundraising and ensure your donation is allocated correctly.

For bank details, a paying-in slip, or if you have any questions, please contact the Supporter Services team at supporter.services@acorns.org.uk or on 01564 825037.

Collector protection

Acorns is committed to protecting our collectors. You have the right to a safe environment and should immediately report any instances of harassment or safety concerns to the Acorns Supporter Services team at supporter.services@acorns.org.uk or on 01564 825037.

Any complaints relating to fundraising activity should be reported to Acorns immediately.

Collectors should never place themselves in unsafe situations and should work in accordance with Acorns safeguarding and lone-working guidance.

DISCLAIMER: This guidance is based on the Fundraising Code of Practice and UK Collection Laws. It is not a substitute for legal advice. Always contact the Acorns Fundraising team with any questions, or if further guidance is required.