

APRIL 2020

CAF UK GIVING CORONAVIRUS BRIEFING

How charities and donors are reacting to COVID-19



Introduction

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) has been conducting research into giving behaviours across the UK for decades. In these unprecedented times that we find ourselves in due to the COVID-19 crisis, we have been monitoring public reactions to charitable giving as well as talking to charities about their concerns. As such, since 17th March, CAF has conducted a number of one-question surveys with charities (pulse surveys) to measure the mood as things very quickly evolve. These have been sent out by CAF via email to our charity clients (base sizes for each survey shown on the charts below) with surveys completed quickly to obtain a snapshot.

In addition, as part of CAF's ongoing polling work with YouGov, we used our late March survey to ask the general public questions around charitable giving and COVID-19. By way of context, this survey was carried out just after the UK Government introduced new 14 day self-isolation guidance for any household where someone was unwell, through to just after the Prime Minister gave his March 23rd televised address to the nation that brought in widespread lockdown measures. We also conducted an overnight poll on 17th and 18th March to ask some benchmark questions.

We hope this paper adds to the debate around charities at this time. We will continue to publish our research as we conduct it, and this will be available on our specially created [Covid-19 research page](#).

THE VIEW AMONGST THE BRITISH PUBLIC

The implications of COVID-19 on public donations

People aged 45 to 54 are the most concerned about their income in the next six months and are the most likely to say they will donate less than usual because of the crisis.

Overall, 14% of people say that they are likely to donate to charity less than they usually do over the next six months in the wake of the outbreak, whilst 22% say they will likely donate more than usual. Older people are the least likely to say they will donate less than usual (2% of those aged 65+ say they are very likely to donate less compared to a high of 9% of 25-34 year olds). Only four in ten people aged 65+ are worried about their income over the next six months, compared to a peak of 73% amongst 45-54 year olds.

CAF's research on this echoes broader research that polling companies are conducting, with Savanta¹ research conducted over the weekend of March 28-29, showing 42% of people saying that COVID-19 has already decreased their disposable income, a rise of 5 percentage points in just over a week. YouGov² separately found that a third of people are worried that they might miss a bill payment in the next 6 months. Against this backdrop, fundraising income from individuals to charitable causes is an immediate concern as people facing sudden and wholly unexpected financial pressures hunker down to look after their family finances as best they can.

¹ <https://savanta.com/views-and-news/#.XotQPZqWwwk>

² <https://yougov.co.uk/covid-19>

To what extent are you worried about the security of your own household income over the next six months in the wake of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

% individuals



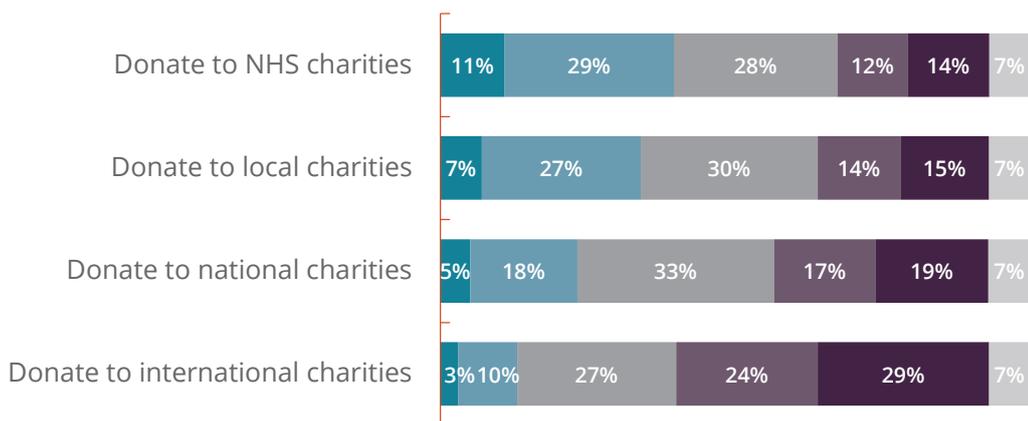
YouGov fieldwork 19-26 March. Base all UK adults aged 16+; N=1,103

Charities which support the NHS garner the most support with four in ten (40%) people saying they are likely to donate to one in the next three months because of the crisis. Local and national charities are the next most popular at 34% and 23% respectively, followed by international charities, which only 13% say they will donate to because of the pandemic.

As we have often noted in our annual UK Giving reports³, previous research tells us that when there is a natural disaster abroad, the UK public rally to give and donations to international charities rise to meet the need. However, with the coronavirus crisis now on the UK's own doorstep, it appears that for the time being, people plan to give their money locally, either to NHS-associated charities, other frontline help or local charities.

To what extent, if at all, are you likely to do each of the following in the near-future (i.e. in the next 3 months), as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak?

% individuals



Very likely Somewhat likely Neither likely nor unlikely Not very likely Not at all likely Don't know

YouGov fieldwork 19-26 March. Base all UK adults aged 16+; N=1,103

³ <https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/publications/2019-publications/uk-giving-2019>

How the public are getting involved in their communities

Younger people are less likely to say they will volunteer

Since the middle of March, willingness to help in the community has increased amongst the UK population. In our first survey on 17th and 18th March, three in ten (29%) said they did not intend to volunteer in any way. The latest survey, conducted over a longer time period (19th - 26th March) showed that just 17% say they won't be getting involved. This is higher amongst younger people, with one quarter of 16-24 year olds saying they won't be getting involved in any way.

More than half of people expect to help their neighbours or friends with shopping/errands (56%) or check on their vulnerable or elderly neighbours (51%). Just over four in ten (44%) say they are likely to look out for people in their area in general.

Which, if any, of the following activities would you be likely to do to provide help during this time?



YouGov fieldwork 19-26 March. Base all UK adults aged 16+; N=1,103

Around a fifth of people (18%) said they are likely to join a local group set up to respond to the crisis or co-ordinated local efforts via social media (20%). One in twenty said they are likely to set up a local group to deal with the crisis.

Women and the middle aged are the most likely to agree they will be taking part, particularly around helping neighbours with shopping, checking on vulnerable neighbours, setting up local groups and using social media.

Which, if any, of the following activities would you be likely to do to provide help during this time?



20%

Use social media to provide or co-ordinate help in the local community



18%

Join a local group set up to help deal with the crisis



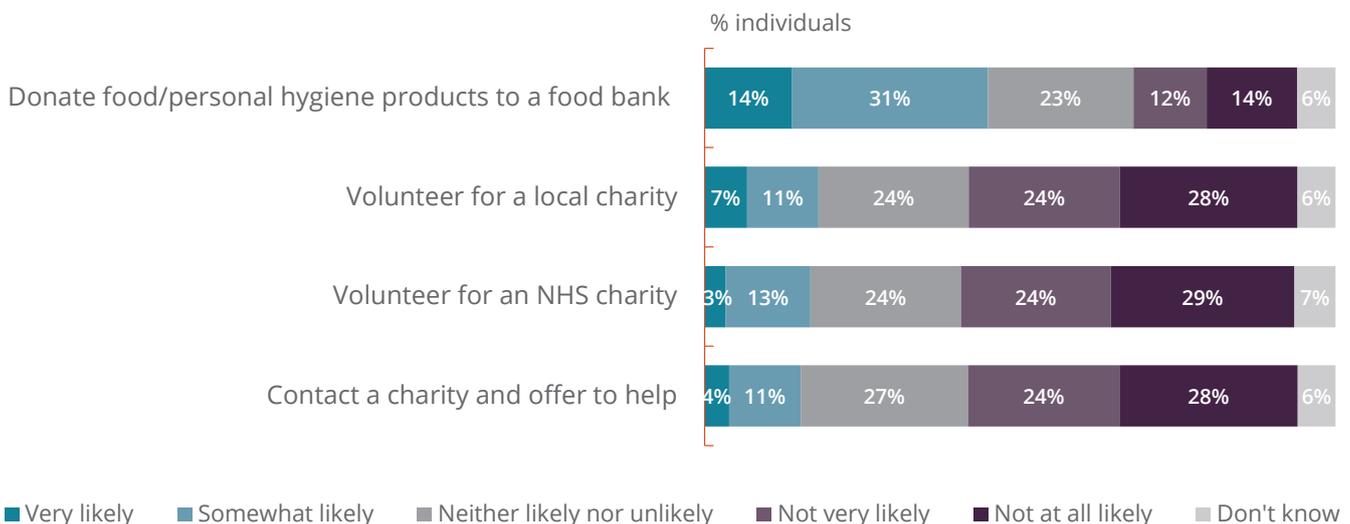
5%

Set up a local group to deal with the crisis

YouGov fieldwork 19-26 March. Base all UK adults aged 16+; N=1,103

Other ways in which people expect to get involved include donating food/personal hygiene products to a foodbank, the most popular of the activities we asked about with 45% saying they would be likely to do so in the near future, as well as volunteering for charities. Around one in seven (15%) people say they will contact a charity and offer to help.

To what extent, if at all, are you likely to do each of the following in the near-future (i.e. in the next 3 months), as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak?

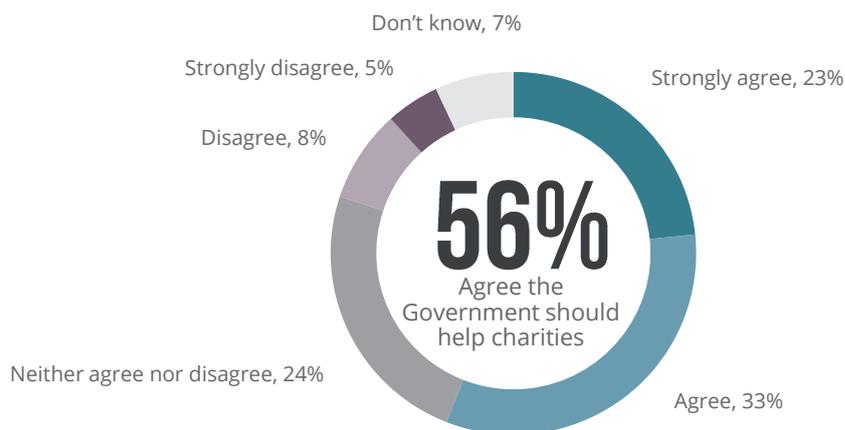


YouGov fieldwork 19-26 March. Base all UK adults aged 16+; N=1,103

The public's view on Government support for the charity sector

The majority of people agree that the Government should provide financial support to charities if their income is affected by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Just under a quarter (23%) of people strongly agree. A further third (33%) agree, whilst a quarter (24%) neither agrees nor disagrees. Young people are more likely to strongly agree that the Government should help than older people are (30% of 16-24 year olds vs. 17% of the over 65s).

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Government should provide financial support to charities if their income is affected by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?



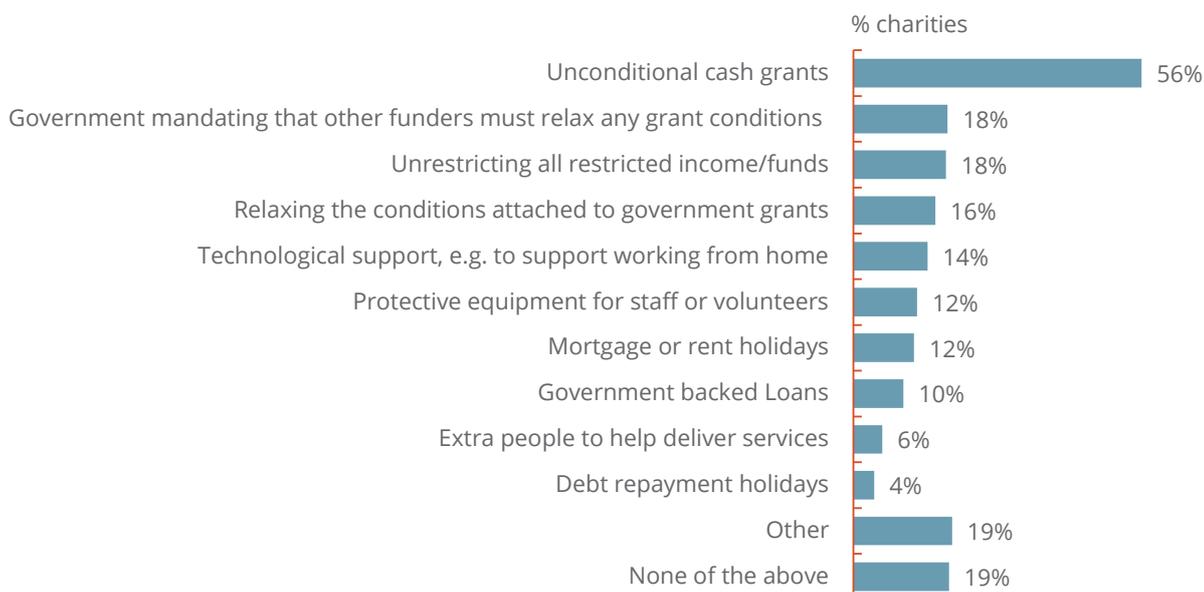
YouGov fieldwork 19-26 March. Base all UK adults aged 16+; N=1,103

THE VIEW FROM CHARITIES

Recent CAF polling of charities reveals many are very worried about their futures and urgently need support.

When we asked charities what they most needed from Government to help see them through the COVID-19 outbreak, the answer was overwhelmingly unconditional cash grants (56%). This was followed by just under two-fifths saying each of Government mandating that other funders must relax any cash grants (18%) and unrestricting all restricted funding (18%). Clearly funding is the main issue charities are telling us they need.

What are the three things your organisation needs the most right now from the Government to help see you through the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

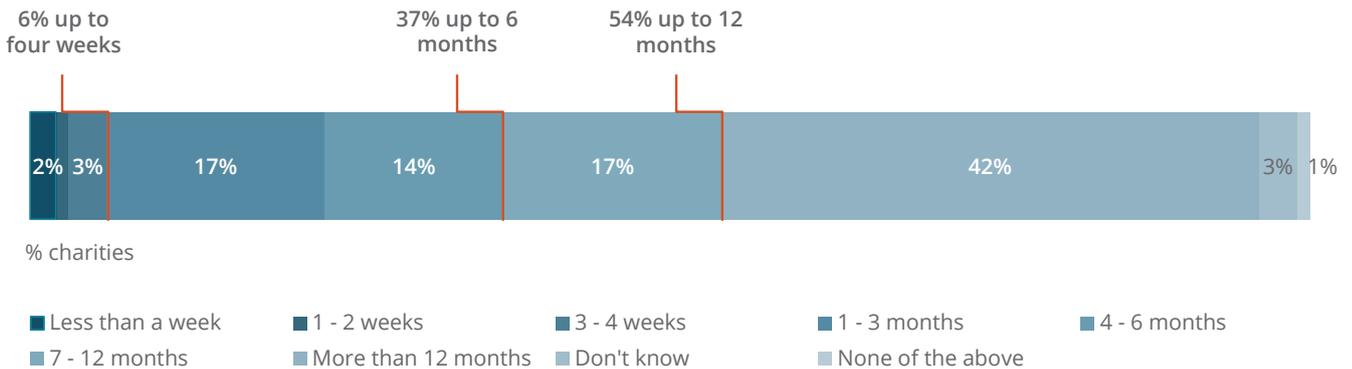


CAF Fieldwork 18 - 26 March. Base, N=340 charities

How long do charities think they can operate without additional help

In terms of how long they thought they could operate in their current form, assuming no extra help became available, the majority (54%) of charities said up to 12 months, and within that, 37% said up to 6 months. These are high levels and should be of concern.

Assuming no extra help becomes available, either from the Government or elsewhere, how long do you think your charity can operate in its current form, given the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis?



CAF Fieldwork 23 – 27 March. Base, N=271 charities

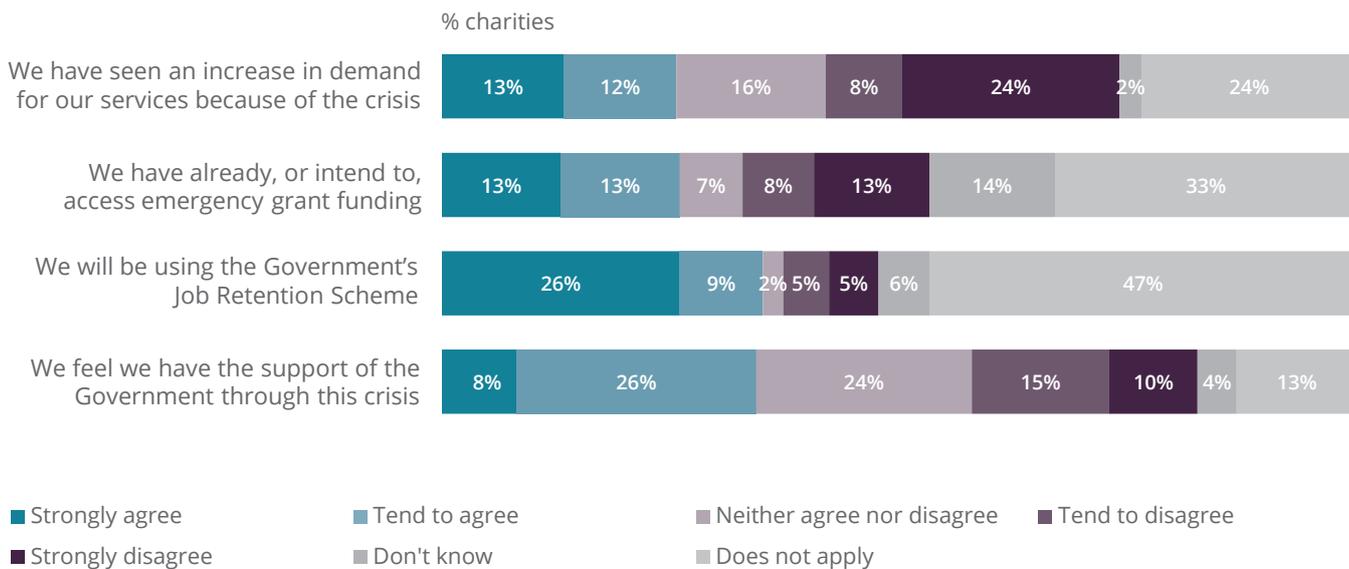
Demand for charities rising

One in four charities have seen an increase in demand for their services because of the crisis, and within this, 13% agree strongly, although many disagree with this or it does not apply to their charity. For a third of charities, applying for emergency funding does not apply to them but for 26% there is agreement that they already have or intend to access emergency grant funding.

Almost half (47%) said that the Government's Job Retention Scheme does not apply to them but 35% agree that they will use it and, in fact, this is the statement that garners the highest level of strength of agreement (26% agreeing strongly).

The final statement asked about was whether charities feel they have the support of the Government through this crisis. Although just over a third agreed with this statement overall, strength of agreement was more muted at just 8% agreeing strongly. At the other end of the scale, 25% disagreed although only one in ten strongly disagreed.

Thinking about the crisis caused by the global coronavirus outbreak (also known as COVID-19), please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.



CAF Fieldwork 31 March to 1 April. Base, N=539 charities

How the crisis is affecting individual charities

Decreased income coupled with increased demand is leaving some charities struggling.

Our most recent poll amongst 539 charities ran from 31st March to 1st April and included the opportunity for charities to tell us in their own words how the crisis is affecting them. Overall, feedback from charities was that income is down whilst demand has increased. Charities are feeling uncertain of the future, with a need for funding/grants, but many feel that they haven't received any support.

Of those charities which answered the question, the vast majority mention that either their organisation has had to close (such as the churches, village halls and charities that rely on face to face contact) or that charitable activities and fundraising have been suspended. For many, this is having an impact on income, which the majority have seen a decline at a time when their services are in demand.

Some charities mention furloughing staff, whilst many have switched to working from home or trying to offer an online service (whilst acknowledging they won't be able to reach as many people this way). The general impression of whether to furlough is one of confusion – can charities furlough staff when they may still need to run a service for those who need it? Those that do furlough staff don't tend to furlough everyone, which can mean increased workloads for those who remain. Others think it's not worth furloughing staff, as the charity still needs to operate. Charities would like to see more support or clearer information on what can help them at this time.



'Our charity normally provides support via some in-centre services e.g. older people's social day care / dementia day care and many other services which...alongside our grant brings in income from charges of circa £40k per month. We won't get that income but we cannot furlough our staff as we need them for the increase demand in home services over 100 hot meals delivery per day/laundry /550 welfare phone calls each week/shopping/prescription collection/Information advice and guidance online and over the telephone, etc. We employ 68 people and are utilising those that can work (not in isolation) – as some go into isolation others come out so it's a really moveable feast. We have reserves but they have been hard fought and won't last. Money that is available is very targeted, quite rightly, but there seems to be no way to recoup what we have lost or what we are spending.'



'We mainly rely on grants and trusts, and donations from individuals. These are falling now. Some aspects of our office based work has increased because the people / organisations whom we serve have more time and are approaching us.. The work of some of our employees has reduced, but they also have some critical areas of work to do. Hence, we are not able to furlough staff at the moment, though we can reduce the work hours. In these circumstances, we can't get the assistance from the Government as we are not able to furlough where employed do not do any work. Our income is also falling. We were to sell our property for which we had a good offer, that too is being delayed because of the present situation. All this is putting a heavy strain on our cash reserves.'



'We have suspended most of our activities as they were generally face to face interactions. We have repurposed our sports hall as a neighbourhood resource centre as part of the local and ward level support package to vulnerable households...Twelve staff have been furloughed; the others repurposed or working from home. We host many other VCS organisations and businesses and they are beginning to feel the strain. Testing weeks/months ahead.'



'The rapid change to working remotely in a service which covers direct case work has been problematic... with young people who were socially isolated but now have a comorbidity of anxiety and fear. These young people all need continuous contact, and management at a distance is concerning, particularly for those families [where] parental mental health and domestic violence has also been an issue. This has added to staff worries that they miss something, all of which has to be carefully managed.'

Some charities mention that most of their staff is made up of volunteers who largely fall in the 70+ age group, raising concerns for the volunteers' health as well as what the level of self-isolation means for the charity.

These are uncertain and worrying times that we find ourselves in – every aspect is moving at pace and there is no doubt that research findings are quickly evolving. We hope you find this useful but for our most up to date insight as well as links to other key sources of insight, please do visit www.cafonline.org/research/coronavirus-and-charitable-giving.



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