



# Charities Aid Foundation UK Giving Report 2021



# C O N T E N T S

1.0

## OVERALL ENGAGEMENT WITH CHARITABLE AND CIVIC ACTIVITIES

How do people get involved?  
Who engages the most?

2.0

## GIVING MONEY

How many people give?  
How much do people give?  
What is the total amount given?  
Which causes do people give to?  
Proportions given to cause areas  
Who gives to what?  
How people give  
Being asked to give  
Frequency of giving

3.0

## OTHER WAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE GET INVOLVED

Volunteering  
Giving goods  
Protesting and petitioning

4.0

## TRUST IN CHARITIES

Trust in charities increased in  
2020, and remains higher than  
pre-pandemic

5.0

## METHOD

CAF has been producing the  
UK Giving report since 2004,  
and has been tracking giving in  
the UK for several decades







# About CAF

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) is a leading international charity registered in the United Kingdom, with nine offices covering six continents. We work with partners across industry, government and individual philanthropists to ensure vital funding reaches charities around the world. This enables us to deliver on what we strive to be all about – which is to play our part in providing a fair and sustainable future for all.

**We are CAF and we make giving count.**



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT

“Analysing the evolution of our giving behaviour is vital. In order to make our donations count, we need to understand how and when people give.”



The UK’s giving landscape has – as with so much else in our lives – been dramatically changed as individuals, organisations, and wider society responded to the initial shock of Covid-19 and the subsequent tentative steps into a new normality. For so many of us, the role of charity in all of its myriad forms has become ever more vivid.

As a leading voice in the sector, CAF is committed to helping us all to better understand and respond to the challenges now facing thousands of charities across the UK.

Analysing the evolution of our giving behaviour is vital – in order to make our donations count, we need to understand how and when people give. That is why we place such value on this report, it is the UK’s largest and most detailed study of its kind.

It provides unique insights into the changing ways that people in the UK are giving to charity, the amounts they donate, and the causes they choose to support. We do this in order to contribute to our national conversation around giving and to highlight the valuable work being done by charities and communities and to celebrate the generosity of the British people.

Crucially, this research also informs Government, policy-makers and fellow charities in order to foster the collaboration that we know is necessary to advance important initiatives, identify challenges, spark digital innovation and ultimately improve lives. This report builds on the 2020 Covid-19 Special Report into giving trends during the early stages of the pandemic and here we capture how our giving has changed over the longer term.

The stark decline in cash donations, the fledgling return to in-person fundraising events and the steady adoption of digital giving by the general public are all elements of this report that will help charities to adapt, do more and achieve more for their beneficiaries.

And while we rightly celebrate a rise in the total amount given to charity over the course of 2020 to £11.3 billion – up from £10.6 billion in 2019 - the worrying trend we first identified in 2016 tells us that the number of people donating continues to decline. While those who give are giving more, the sustainability of charities relies on mass giving.

It is, however, heartening to note that even as people worry about household finances in uncertain times, giving to charity remains integral to the lives of millions. In sharing this research, we hope not only to inform, but also to showcase that generosity of spirit.

**Neil Heslop**  
Chief Executive, Charities Aid Foundation



£11.3b

**Total amount given to charity over the course of 2020**  
(£10.6 billion in 2019 )



62%

**Proportion of people who gave via donation or sponsorship**  
(65% in 2019/20)





## Key findings



### PEOPLE IN THE UK DONATED £11.3 BILLION TO CHARITIES IN 2020.

From our analysis, we estimate that the total amount given in the UK in 2020 was £11.3 billion (compared to £10.6 billion in 2019). This is against a backdrop of significant concern about household finances, with 44% of people reporting that they were worried about money.



### THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE DONATING REMAINS BELOW AVERAGE, EVEN AS THE ECONOMY REOPENS.

Whilst we previously reported better-than-average giving levels through the initial phase of the UK's lockdown in the spring of 2020, the full-year results and early analysis of the trends into 2021 show a significant decline in the latter part of 2020. In particular, the festive giving period was notably subdued when donation levels would usually be at their peak. Donation levels continue to be lower than average in 2021.



### THE MOST POPULAR CAUSE TO DONATE TO IS ANIMAL WELFARE.

The pandemic has done little to dampen the British enthusiasm for animal welfare. More than a quarter of donors (27%) gave to this cause in 2020, raising between them an estimated £1 billion. The second most popular cause was children and young people (24%).



### FEWER PEOPLE ARE GIVING, BUT THOSE WHO ARE MAKING DONATIONS ARE GIVING MORE.

On a month-by-month basis, larger than usual donations were being made at the start of the pandemic, and charitable gifts remained slightly higher than usual throughout most of the first eight months of 2021. The move away from cash giving may have contributed to the increase since donors are not constrained by the amount of cash in their pockets, and charities may find it easier to encourage desired donation values on their websites.



### GIFT AID USE HAS INCREASED SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN

Although the number of people making donations decreased, more people reported using Gift Aid on their donations than ever before. The scheme allows donors to increase the value of their donations by directing the income tax they would have paid on their donation towards the charity of their choosing. The number of donors using Gift Aid has steadily risen over time, from 51% in 2018 to 53% in 2019 and 55% in 2020.



### CASH GIVING ALL BUT DISAPPEARED AT SOME POINTS DURING 2020 AND IN 2021 IT REMAINS BELOW HISTORIC LEVELS.

Overall, far fewer donors are using cash whilst more are giving using contact-free and digital methods, such as via a website or app, or by debit card. As little as 7% of donors used cash in January 2021, compared to between 30 and 40% in a typical January. The use of these methods by those aged 55+ was accelerated in 2020.





# 1.0 | Overall engagement with charitable and civic activities





# 1.1 How do people get involved?

Overall engagement decreased during 2020 as a whole, and remains low in 2021.

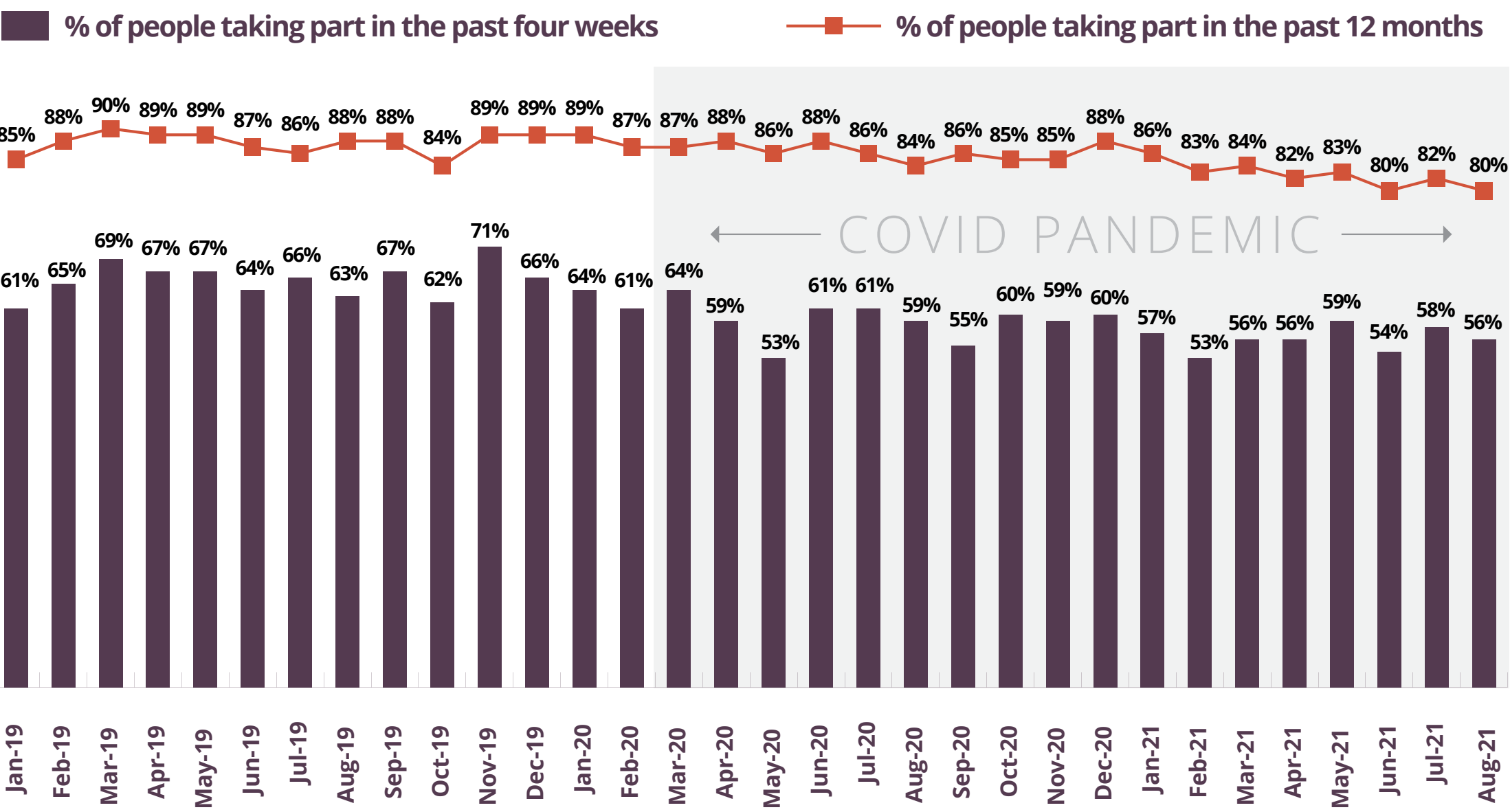
Respondents were shown a list of charitable and civic-minded activities and asked which they had done in both the four weeks and the 12 months preceding the survey.

Our analysis shows that there was a significant decline in monthly participation during 2020, which has continued until August 2021. This reduction in past four-week activity is the largest sustained drop since we began our online survey in 2016.

Reporting of participation in the last 12 months shows a similar pattern. In July 2021, the number of people who reported doing at least one of these activities during the preceding 12 months dipped to the lowest levels recorded since we began our survey in 2016. Nevertheless, it remains the case that a majority of people have been able to participate in some way since the pandemic began.

Overall participation in a charitable or civic activity: January 2019 to August 2021

Figure 1: Which, if any, of the following have you done in the past 12 months/four weeks (any activity)



Base: all adults 16+ c. 1,000 per month (total 37,873).





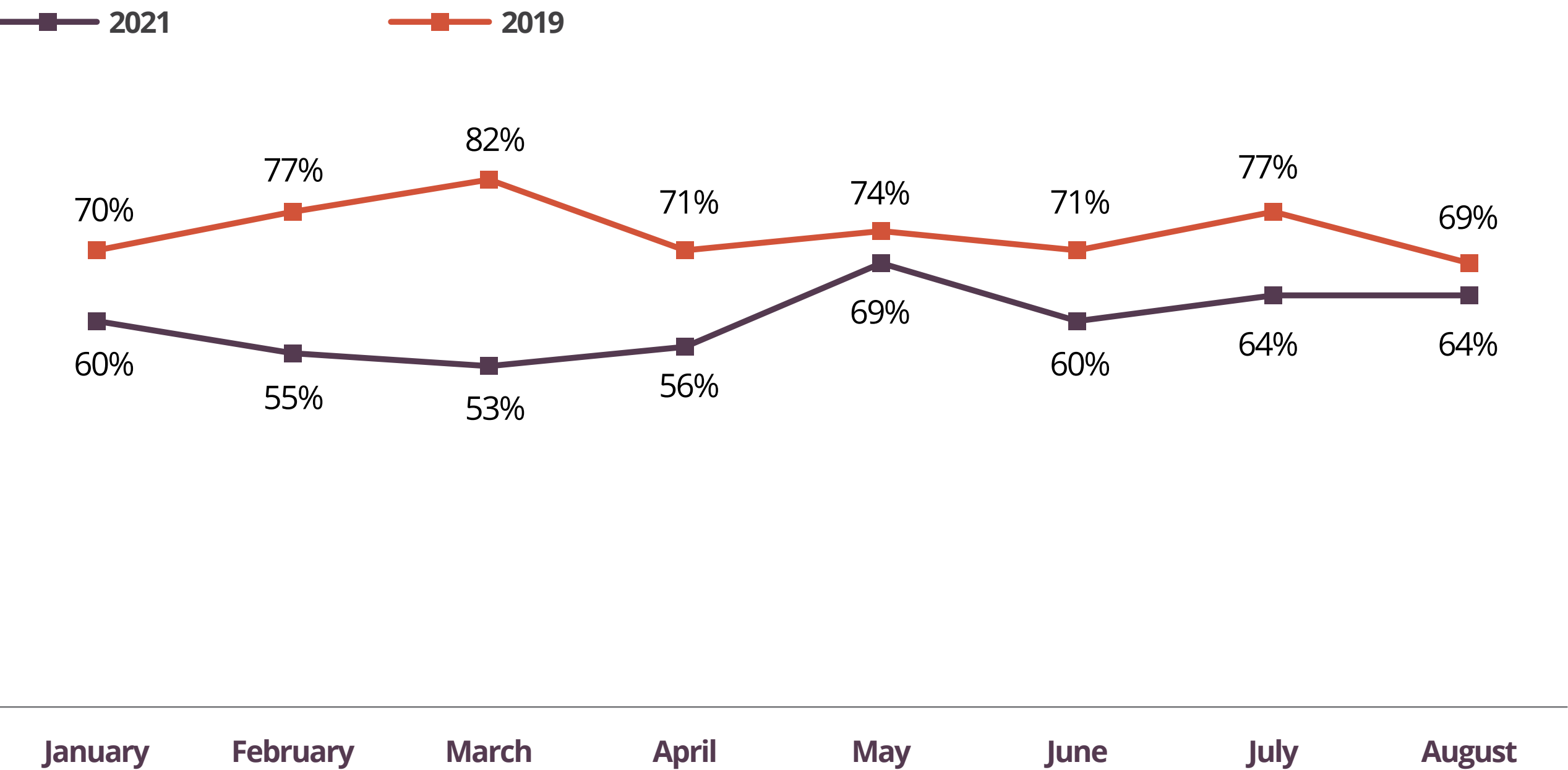
## 1.2 Who engages the most?

Older people continue to be the most likely to engage in charitable or civic activities, but at lower levels than pre-pandemic.

People aged over 65 are more likely than younger adults to engage in charitable and civic activities, a pattern consistent with previous years. However, participation amongst this age group has fallen over the course of the pandemic and remains slightly below pre-Covid levels, despite the lifting of restrictions that took place across the UK during the summer of 2021. The high risk of Covid posed to people in this cohort has likely impacted their ability to participate, and the sustained trend towards scaled back events may continue to dampen opportunities to give for this age group.

*Overall participation in a charitable or civic activity amongst those aged 65+ in the past four weeks:  
A comparison between pre (2019) and during (2021) the pandemic (January to August).*

Figure 2: Which, if any, of the following have you in the last four weeks? (All aged 65+ who did at least one activity)



Base: all adults 65+ c. 250 per month. Jan – Aug 2021, n= 2,250; Jan – Aug 2019, n=2,158.

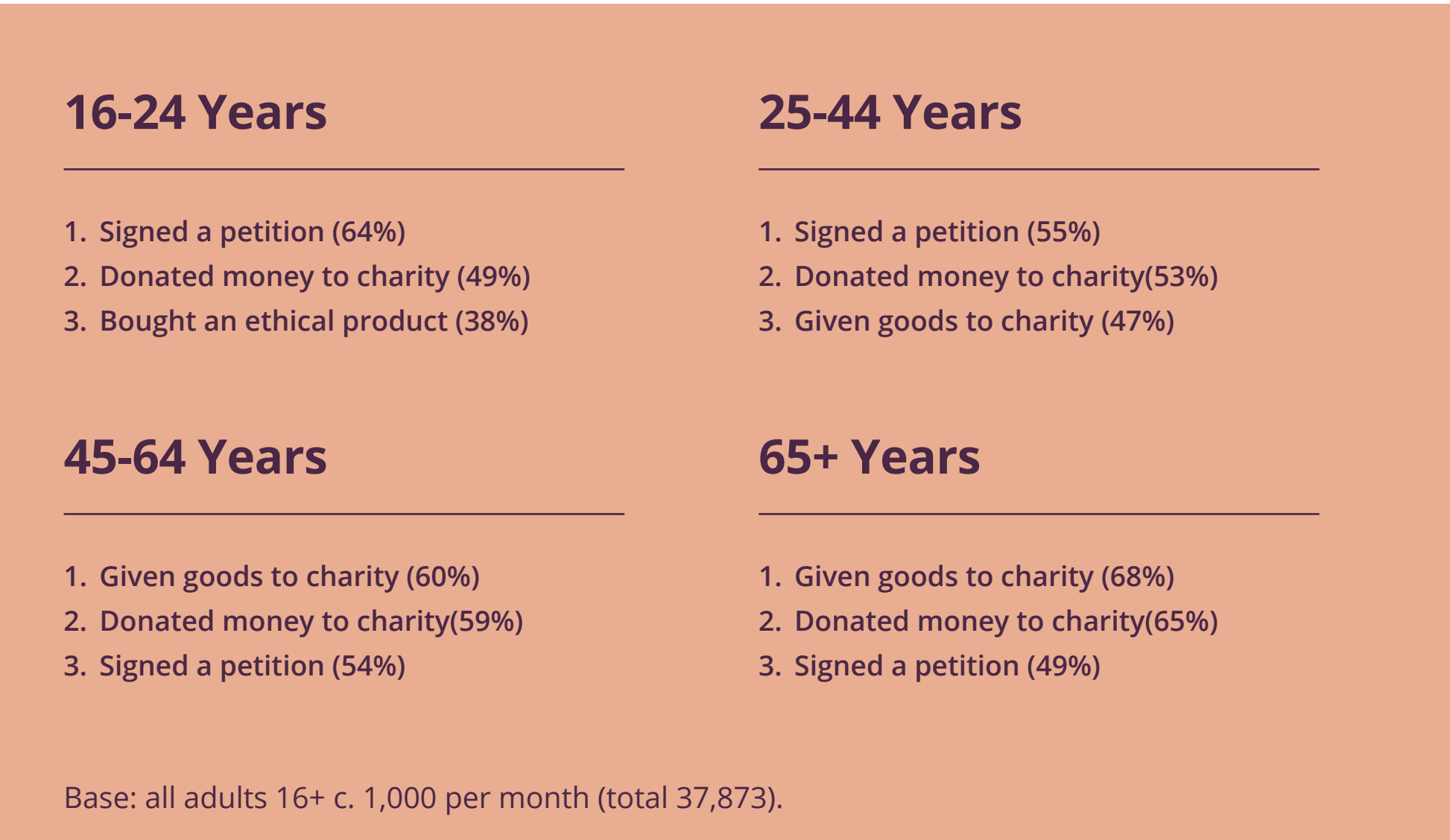


Similarly, on a month-by-month basis, the UK’s youngest adults are also slightly less likely to have participated in charitable or civic activities so far in 2021, when compared to before to the same months in 2019 (i.e. pre-Covid).

Looking at the long term trend over the past five years, the actual type of activities undertaken continue to vary with age in much the same way as usual, albeit at lower levels in many cases. Figure 3 illustrates the top ways in which each age group tends to get involved.

*The most common ways of getting involved, by age cohort (2020 average).*

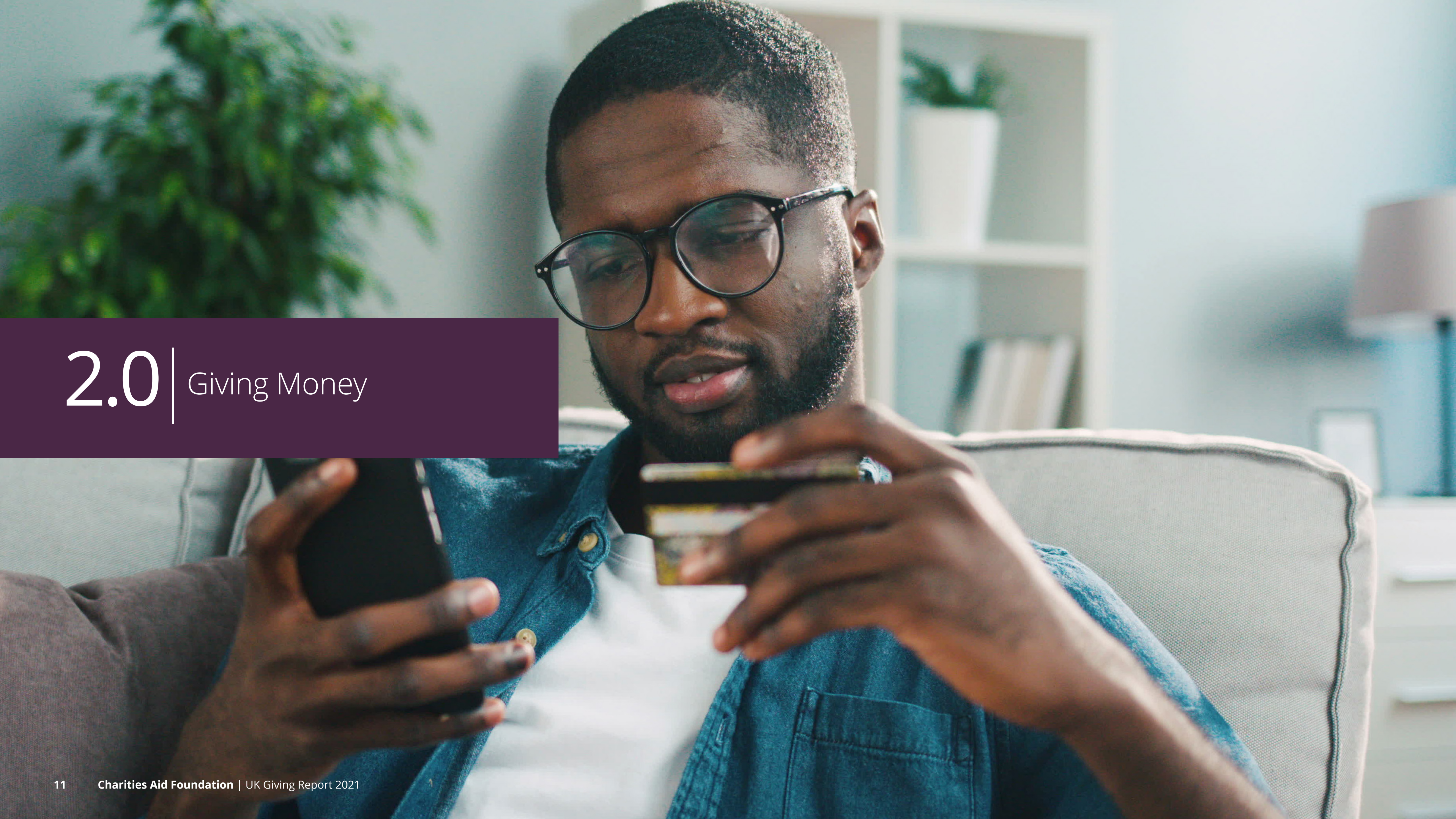
Which, if any, of the following have you in the last 12 months?



Women are more likely than men to have taken part in almost all of the activities listed. During 2020, nine in 10 (90%) women reported taking part in at least one activity listed in the past 12 months compared with just over eight in 10 (83%) men. Similarly, almost seven in 10 (67%) women gave to charity through donations or sponsorship compared to six in 10 (58%) men. These patterns have been shown to be consistent over time and do not appear to have altered in the wake of the pandemic.







# 2.0 | Giving Money





## 2.1 How many people give?

Public support for charities held up during the first lockdown, but the latter part of 2020 saw fewer people giving than usual and this trend has continued in 2021.

During the first half of 2020, the number of people who donated to charity was broadly in line with previous years. In our Covid-19 Special Report, published in November 2020, we remarked that this was testament to the generosity of the British people, given the difficult circumstances many were facing.

As we laid out in that Special Report, there was an initial flurry of fundraising activity after the first 'stay at home' order was issued towards the end of March 2020. This included Captain Tom's efforts to raise money for NHS Together ; the 2.6 challenge run by the organisers of the London Marathon (which usually takes place in April, but which in 2020 was postponed until the autumn); and two televised fundraisers - BBC's Big Night In, and Lady Gaga & the World Health Organisation's 'Together at Home'. These all took place in April 2020. At the same time, the overall average monthly donation value increased, rising to £58 from £47 in March.

However, in spite of the concerted and somewhat successful effort by the charitable sector to harness public support over those first months of the pandemic, the latter part of 2020 saw lower levels of giving than usual, and this trend has continued until August 2021 when we began our final analysis of the data. September 2020 and April 2021 saw the lowest levels of monthly giving recorded since 2016, when we began our polling.

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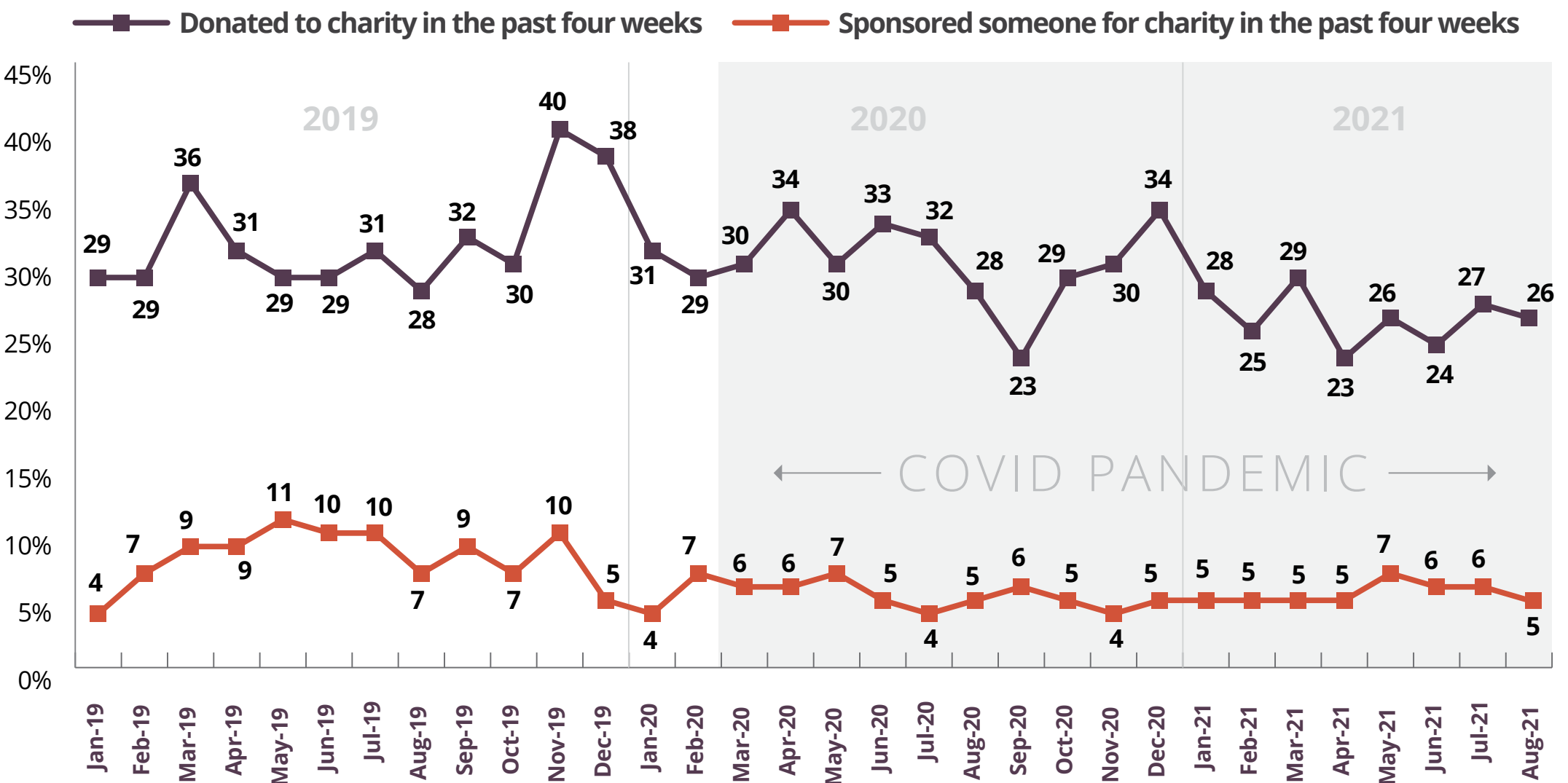
The latter part of 2020 saw lower levels of giving than usual, and this trend continued in 2021





Proportion of adults who donated or sponsored someone: January 2019 to August 2021

Figure 3: Which, if any, of the following have you done in the last four weeks? (Donated money to charity, sponsored someone for a charity).



Base: all adults 16+ c. 1,000 per month (total 37,873).

The final two months of the year traditionally see the highest numbers of people making donations, and donations at this time of year tend to also be larger. However, the combined effects of reduced spending power in the economy, decreased fundraising activity, and fewer people able to donate at events, places of worship or at work, resulted in a subdued festive giving period.

November and December 2020 saw far fewer people donating money in comparison to the same months in previous years, with the greatest difference occurring in November, usually the peak month for giving in the UK (30% donated in the past four weeks, a decline from 40% in November 2019). The scaling back of regular UK fundraising fixtures, such as the Poppy Appeal and Children in Need, likely contributed to the decline.

Furthermore, sponsorship levels were lower than usual throughout 2020. So far 2021 shows little sign of recovery, reflecting the cancellation or scaling back of many fundraising events. In a typical year, levels of sponsorship start low in January and February but increase as the weather gets warmer (when people tend raise money for charities through various outdoor activities). However, in 2020, the usual increase at springtime did not occur. Instead, levels of sponsorship remained below average as we entered the autumn of 2021. Trends over the longer term show that the number of people donating via sponsorship has been in decline since 2017.





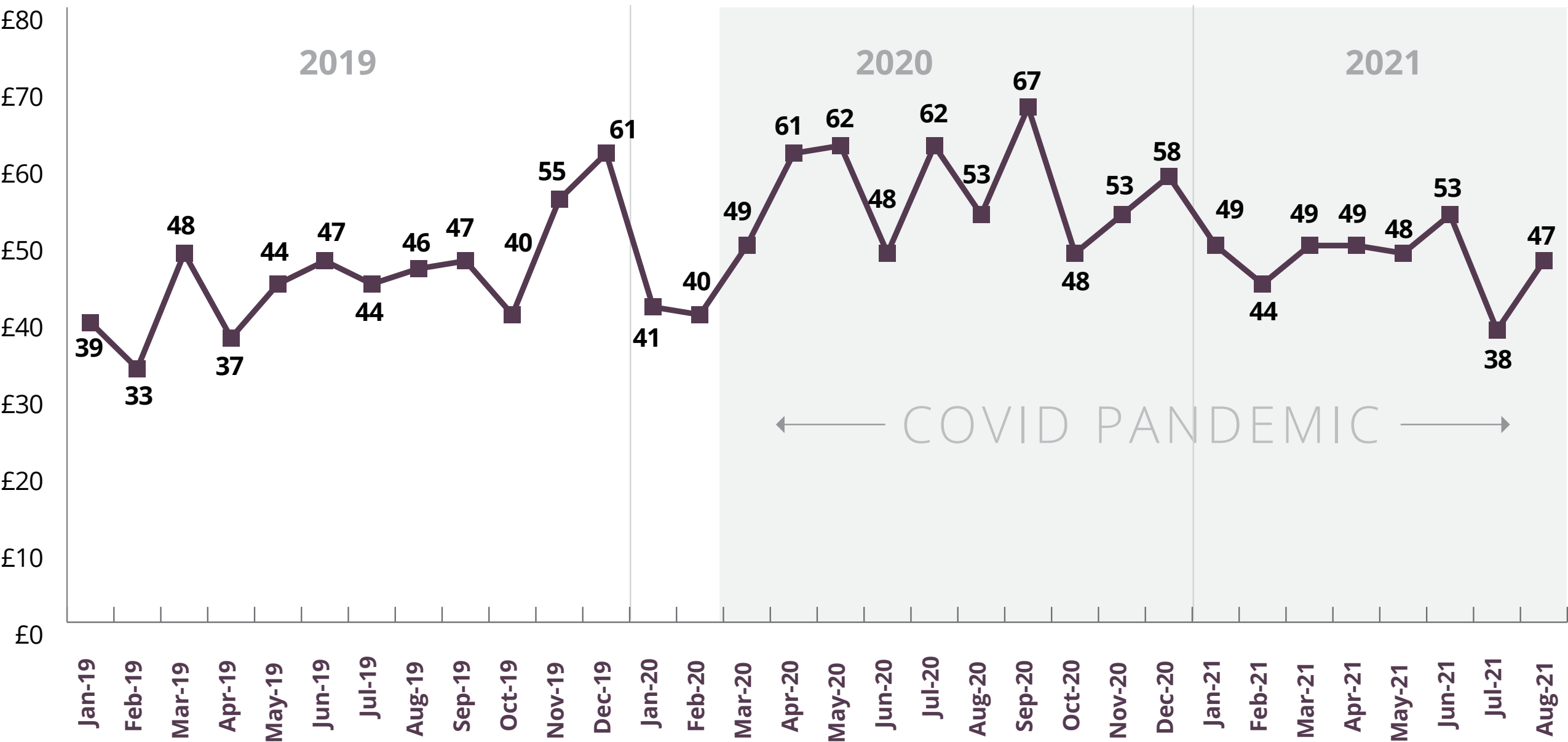
## 2.2 How much do people give?

The pandemic appears to have advanced the trend towards fewer people giving more.

In years prior to the pandemic we had remarked on a trend towards fewer people giving more. Responses collected during 2020 and 2021 indicate that this trend has gained some traction. Our analysis shows an increase in the average (mean) monthly donation during the first few months of the pandemic, rising from £49 in March 2020 to over £60 in April and May, and peaking at £67 in September of that year. The average monthly donation has remained slightly elevated for much of 2021 compared to pre-pandemic levels (the average monthly donation across January to June 2021 being £49, compared to £42 for the same period in 2019).

A notable exception to the trend of fewer people giving more occurred in December 2020, when fewer people gave, but they also gave less than usual for the time of year. The average donation in December 2020 was £58, compared to £61 in December 2019 and £67 in December 2018. Combined with lower than usual numbers of people making donations around the festive season, many charities which rely on their Christmas fundraising campaigns are likely to have lost out.

Figure 4: Mean amount given through donations or sponsorship by month



Base: All adults 16+ whom donated or sponsored in the past 4 weeks c. 300 per month (total n=10,206).



**Older people responded to the pandemic with larger gifts, whilst younger people cut back on their donations.**

The increase in the average monthly gift (by either donation or sponsorship) during 2020 was driven by older adults. Whilst in 2019, donors aged 25-34 made the largest average monthly gifts at £50, in 2020 that declined to £45. Among 16-24 year olds it fell even more sharply, from £46 to £29. But among older adults it increased substantially. In 2020, amongst donors aged 55-64, the average amount donated or sponsored in a month reached £71, much higher than it was in 2019 (£45). Similarly, the amount given by those aged 65+ increased from £48 to £63.

The mean average amount given continues to be larger for men than for women but both have increased their gifts compared to 2019. The average amount given for men is now £59 (compared with £51 in 2019) while for women it is £50 (compared with £42 in 2019). The median amount donated or sponsored for both has remained at £20 since 2019.

**Some have changed their giving habits because of the pandemic.**

Between April 2020 and August 2021, we asked the public how their giving habits have changed as a result of the pandemic. Over that period half (52%) of adults reported no impact to their giving behaviour, but more than a third (35%) reported making at least one change. The most commonly reported change was making a donation to charities which support the NHS, at around one in eight people (13%).

One in 10 (10%) reported giving to new or different causes, whilst one in 20 donated to a crowdfunding appeal (5%), a non-charity appeal responding to the pandemic (4%), or refocussed their giving towards charities responding to the crisis (4%).

One in 20 (5%) people also said that they had stopped a regular payment to charity because they were concerned about their finances.

Men are more likely than women to have made no changes to their donation habits (54% vs 51%). This likelihood increases with age, peaking at 59% of those aged 65+ vs a low of 39% of those aged 16-24. Younger age cohorts (from 16 to 44) are more likely than the older cohorts to have given to new or different causes because of the pandemic (12% of the under 45s vs. 9% of those aged 45+).

We asked respondents which charitable activities they were likely to undertake in response to the pandemic, and which they had already done. Two in five (39%) reported they are likely to donate to local charities, and one in 10 (11%) said that they had already done so. A third (32%) of people said that they are likely to give to a food bank and a further one in seven (14%) said they have already done so. One in five (19%) say they are likely to give more to charities than they usually do.

One in 20 (5%) people say that they have included a charity in their will, with a further 3% agreeing that they are ‘very likely’ to do so because of the pandemic.

In total, three in 10 (31%) people say they are likely to focus their charitable giving on UK causes rather than international causes, while one in eight (12%) report the opposite and say they are likely to give to international causes as the pandemic intensifies in poorer parts of the world.

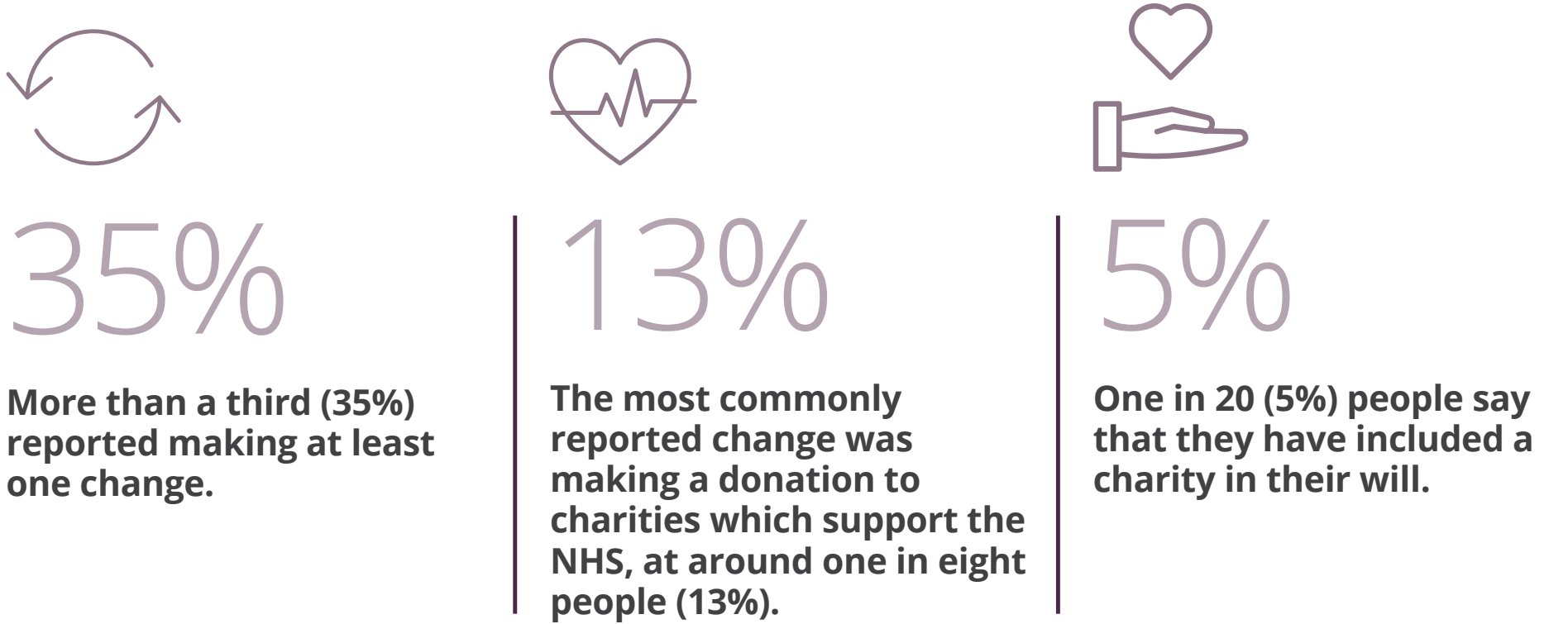
Around one in eight (13%) say they are likely to volunteer for a local charity and one in 10 (9%) are likely to volunteer for an NHS charity. One in 10 say they are likely to use the services offered by a charity (9%) or have already done so (2%).

**Use of the Gift Aid scheme has increased.**

Although the number of people making donations decreased, more people reported using Gift Aid on their donations than ever before. The number of donors using Gift Aid has steadily risen overtime, from 51% in 2018 to 53% in 2019 and 55% in 2020. In January 2021, 61% of donors reported using Gift Aid, the highest proportion we have recorded to date.

The pandemic initially drove increasing numbers of donors online. With many charity websites encouraging donors to ‘giftaid it’ as part of their online donation, the pandemic may have indirectly had the effect of widening the use of the scheme. Further discussion of digital donation trends can be found in Section 2.7 of this report.

**“HAVE YOUR DONATION HABITS CHANGED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS?”**







## 2.3 What is the total amount given?

The total amount donated by the public during 2020 is estimated at £11.3bn.

We estimate that the total amount donated in the UK during 2020 was £11.3 billion – a substantial increase from the £10.6 billion that was given in 2019, although not a statistically significant change. As shown in figure 5, the total amount given has been slowly rising since 2017 but it should be noted that the calculations do not take inflation into account.

The increase in the total amount donated is notable given the decline in overall donor numbers in the second half of the year and further reflects our finding that fewer people are donating, but that they are making larger donations on average. For 2020 as a whole, the average (mean) amount gifted in any given month was much larger than it had been in 2019, increasing from £46 to £54 in 2020.

The increase in the average donation size is impressive given that further analysis of our survey results reveals that in 2020 a significant minority of people (44%) were very or quite worried about the security of their household income in the immediate future. More than one in three (36%) people had personally experienced a decrease in their household's disposable income because of the pandemic<sup>2</sup>, with 14% experiencing a big decrease.

The UK Giving estimate for total giving is calculated from respondents' own recollection of what they gave and so is subject to respondent reliability as well as other considerations that apply to surveys based on a sample of a population rather than a census.

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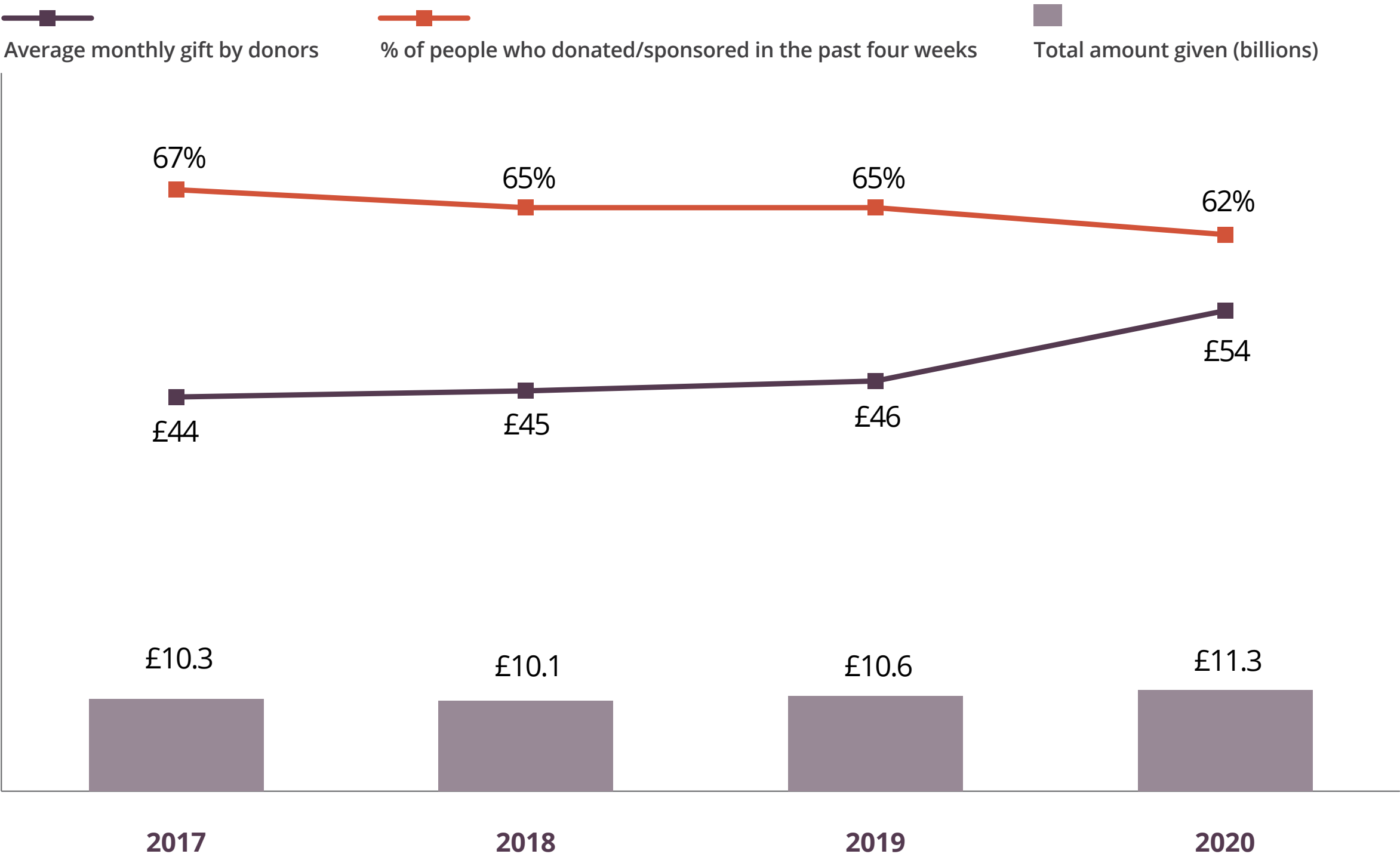
We estimate that the total amount donated in the UK during 2020 was £11.3 billion (£10.6 billion in 2019)

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<sup>2</sup>This question was asked from May 2020 to December 2020



Figure 5: Average and total amount given to charity in the past four weeks



Base: All adults 16+ whom donated or sponsored in the past 4 weeks: 2020: (n=3,863) 2019: (n=4,040), 2018: (n=3,948) 2017: (n=3,730).

During the first half of 2021 (January to June), we estimate that the British public donated £4.6 billion to charity. This is lower than the £5.4 billion donated during the same period in 2020 (when there was a surge in support for charities in response to the pandemic). It suggests that the donation total for the UK may be settling back to pre-pandemic levels, although it is worth reiterating that donor numbers remain soft in historic terms.

## 2.4 Which causes do people give to?

The most popular causes are broadly unchanged, but some cause areas have suffered.

In 2020, the top five causes supported by donations (i.e. excluding sponsorship) were the same as in 2019. Animal welfare continued to be the most popular with 27% of donors giving to this cause in the past four weeks. This was followed by support for children or young people (24%) and medical research (22%). The proportion giving to ‘other’ causes increased from 16% to 19%, which may indicate that those giving to coronavirus-related causes are classifying their donations this way.

We noted in our 2020 Special Report that there was substantially less financial support for medical research charities during the first half of that year. Analysis of data for the whole year shows that the proportion who gave to medical research declined significantly from 25% in 2019 to 22% in 2020. It has continued to decline in the first half of 2021 (21%) and is now lower than the same period in 2019 (26%).

Similarly, the proportion donating to children or young people, always amongst the most widely supported causes in the UK, declined slightly from 26% to 24%.

One cause area of concern is disabled people. Support for disability charities had been generally steady for several years, but support fell significantly in 2020, from 14% in 2019 to 10%. It appears that this was a result of the coronavirus pandemic; donations made during the first three-months of 2020 were consistent with previous years, but then the proportion donating to this cause almost halved between March and April from 15% to 8%. There has been only a slight recovery in 2021.

As in previous years, the arts, along with and sports and recreation, garnered the least support. Giving to sports and recreation charities remained level throughout the pandemic, showing no signs of more widespread support than usual. The arts saw an uplift in support in June 2020, which tapered in the months that followed (6% in June, 5% in July, 4% in August). This may possibly have been triggered by campaign activity around this time to support those working in the arts industry who were affected by the pandemic.

### THE TOP FIVE CAUSES SUPPORTED WERE THE SAME AS IN 2019



27%

Animal welfare continued to be the most popular with 27% of donors giving to this cause in the past four weeks.

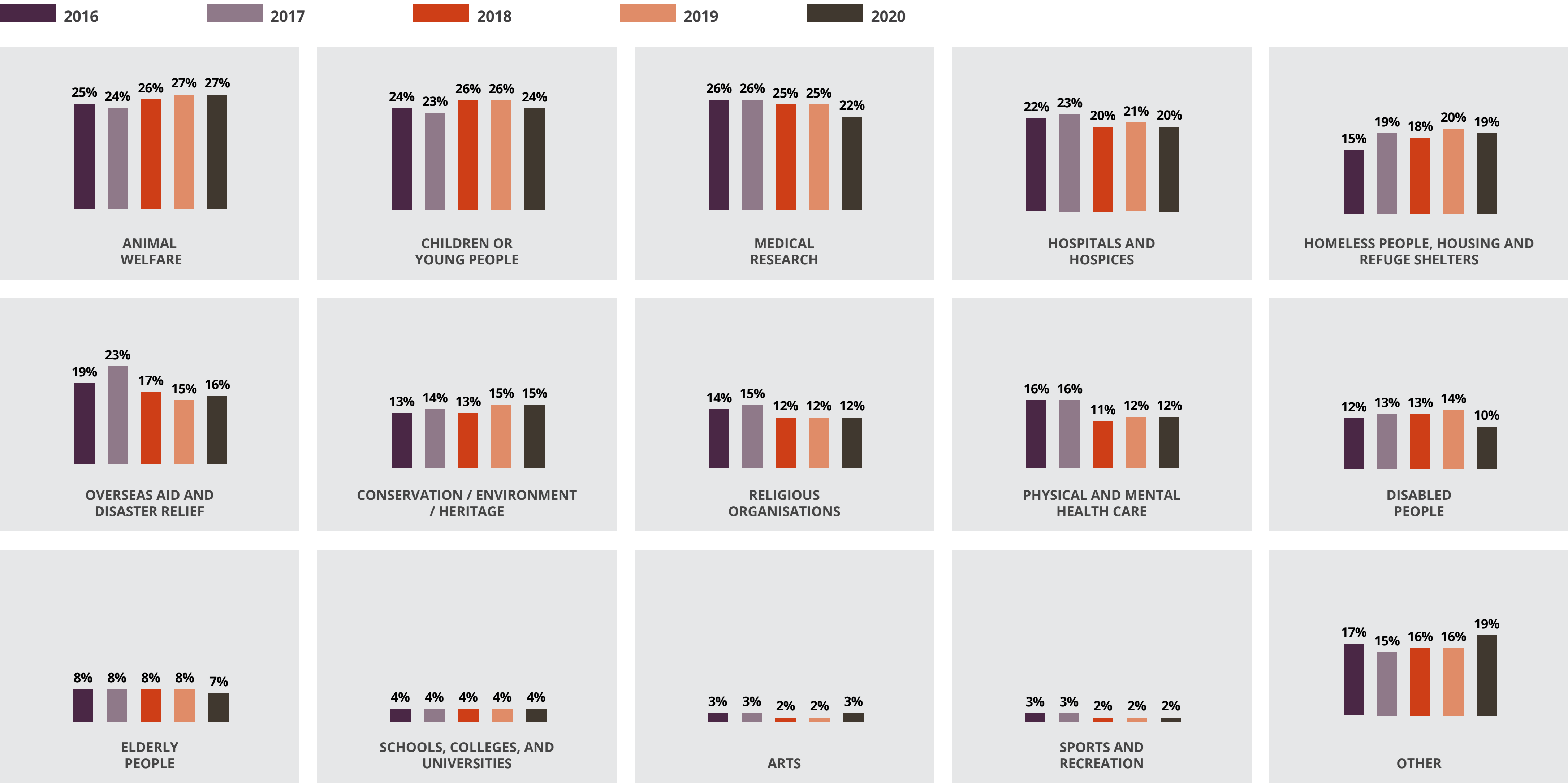


22%

The proportion who gave to medical research declined significantly from 25% in 2019 to 22%.



Figure 6: Which of the following causes have you given to in the past four weeks?



Base: All adults 16+ who have donated to a charity in the last four weeks 2020: (n=4,251), 2019: (n=4,464), 2018: (n=2018 4,243), 2017 (n=4,028).



# 2.5 Proportions given to cause areas

## Religious organisations continue to receive the biggest donations.

According to our research, religious organisations have traditionally received the largest donations and, after falling substantially in 2019, the average (mean) donation amount returned to previous levels in 2020 (£91). Religious organisations receive almost a fifth of the total amount donated, meaning that nearly £1 in every £5 donated in the UK goes to this cause.

The average donation for sports and recreation was the second largest at £48; a four-fold increase on the average donation in 2019 (£12). We noted in Section 2.4 that the number of people who donated to sports and recreation had remained very stable throughout 2020, but it is clear that at least some of those supporters must have upped their donations considerably. With many charitable sporting clubs unable to function during lockdowns, this level of support must have been vital to the organisations concerned, and illustrates how important they are to their local communities.

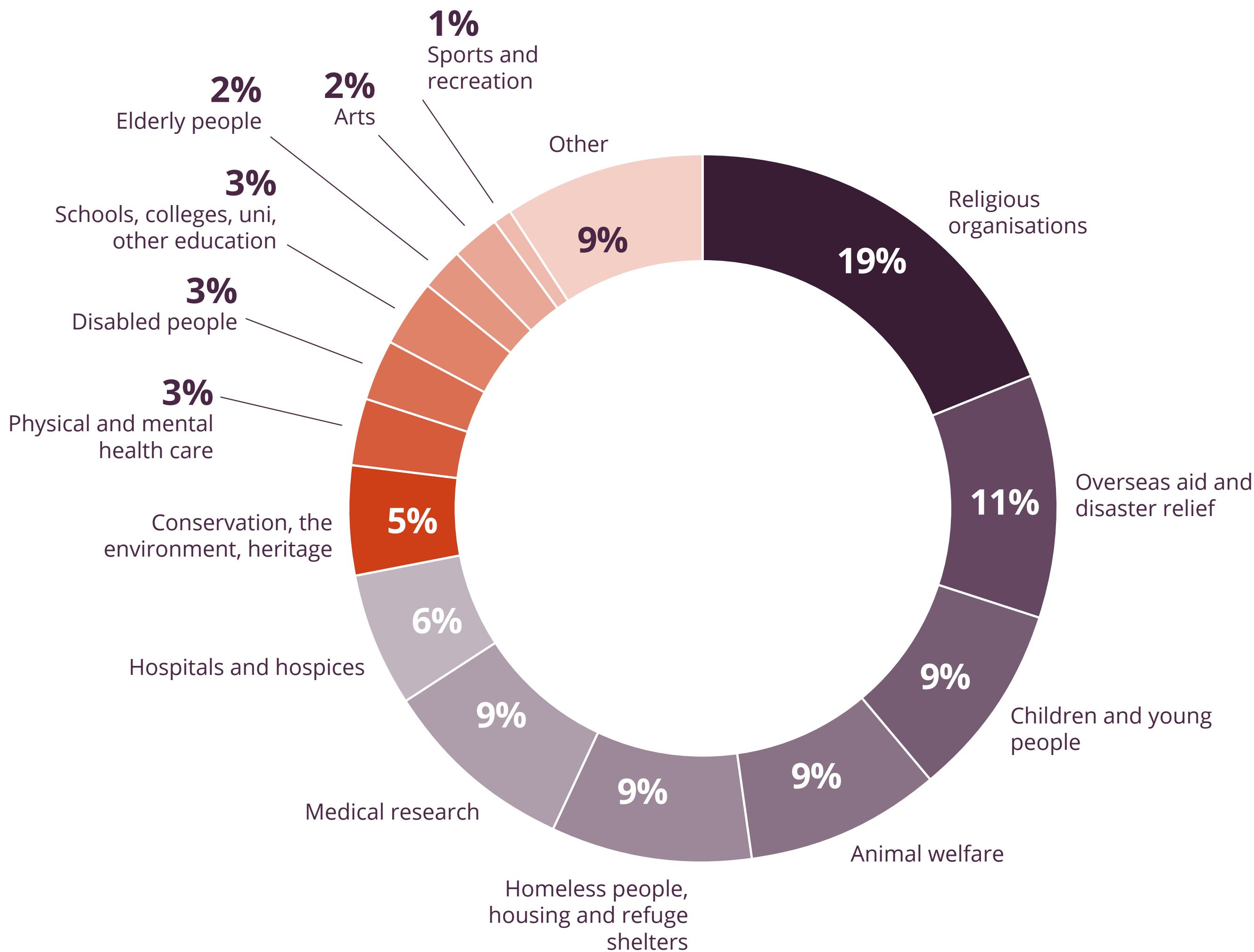
In contrast, the proportion donating to causes related to the arts has fallen by a large amount from £65 in 2019 to £30 in 2020.

It is worth noting that since only a small number of people tend to donate to these two causes, a few donors making substantial changes to their donations can have a large effect on the average.

Schools, colleges and universities saw the third highest average monthly donation (£42), followed by overseas aid and disaster relief (£37). The average donation to the latter has increased substantially since 2019 (£20) which may reflect the UK public's response to global or international pandemic support efforts.

Nearly £1 in every £5 donated in the UK goes to religious organisations

Figure 7: Proportion of total donation amount received by each cause in 2020



Base: all adults 16+ who have donated directly to a charity in the past four weeks (n= 3,557)





## 2.6 Who gives to what?

**In line with long term trends, the choice to support a cause area is influenced by certain demographics.**

Women are more likely than men to support animal welfare charities (32% vs 21%), children or young people (25% vs 21%) and the arts (4% vs 3%). In contrast, men are more likely than women to support medical research (25% vs 20%), religious causes (13% vs 11%) and schools, colleges and education (5% vs 3%). These results were collected during 2020 and are well established differences noted in previous years' research.

Some causes are more commonly supported by older donors than younger. A quarter (24%) of those aged 65+ had given to hospitals and hospices in the past four weeks; the likelihood of supporting this causes decreases with age to a low of 11% among those aged 16-24. Similarly, 17% of the over 65s had given to religious causes compared with just 7% of 16-24s.

A new trend emerging in 2020 was the increased likelihood of those aged 65+ to donate to overseas aid and disaster relief in comparison to younger donors; a fifth (20%) of those aged 65+ gave to these causes compared with 15% of those aged 64 or younger.

Younger donors are more likely than older to donate to charities supporting physical or mental healthcare; 20% of 16-24s have given to this cause in the past four weeks, support drops with age to a low of 8% among those aged 65+.

Regionally, those in London are more likely to have given to causes supporting homeless people, housing and refuge shelters (25% vs 19% UK average), likely the result of a greater prevalence of homelessness in big cities. Those in Northern Ireland are most likely to have given to religious organisations (24% vs 12% UK average), while support for conservation, the environment and heritage continues to be highest in the South West (21% vs 15% average). These differences have all been recorded in previous years.



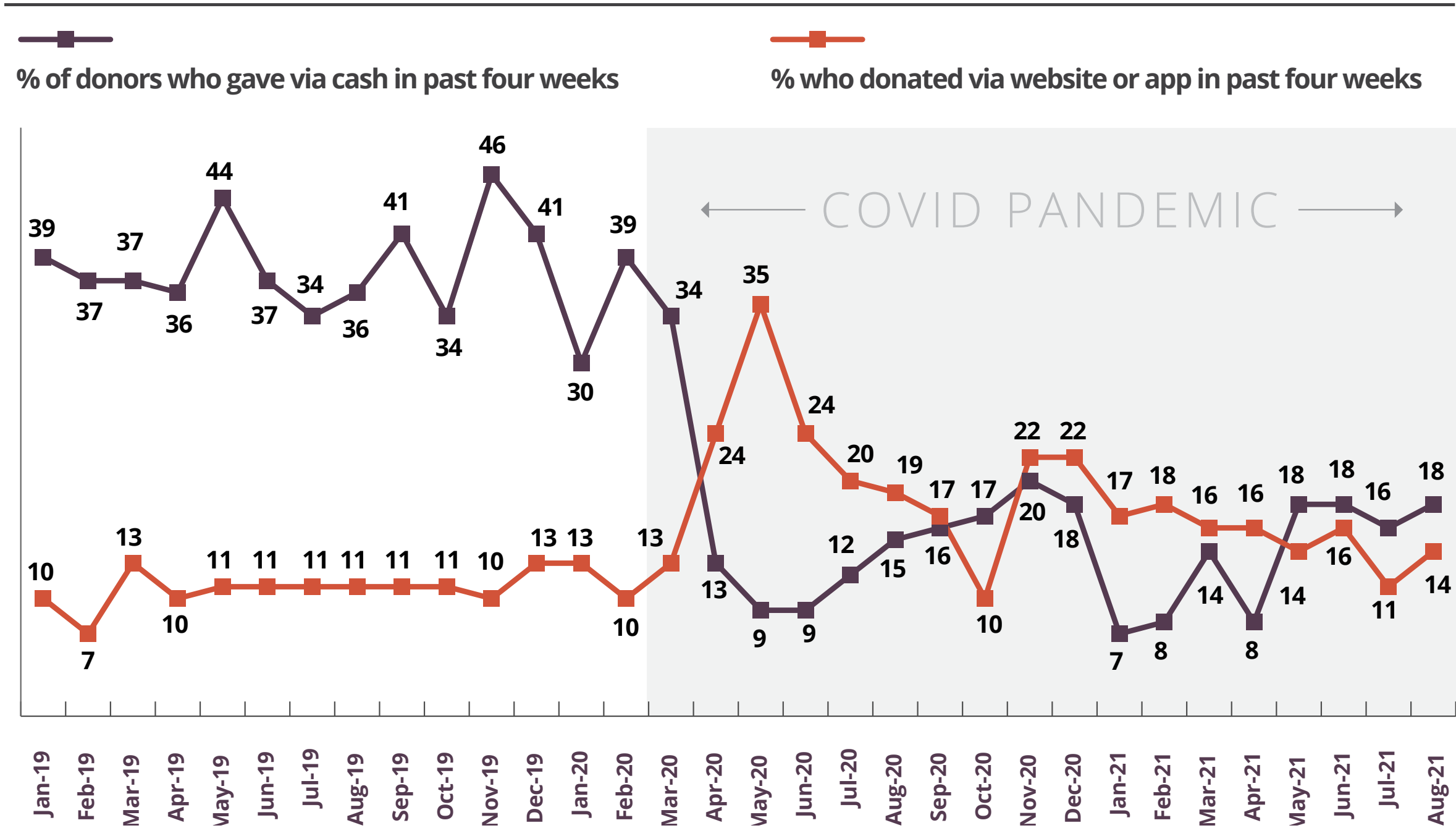
# 2.7 How people give

The pandemic has had a significant impact on how people give to charity.

Traditionally, cash has been the most popular method of giving; in 2019, around half (51%) of donors made a donation via cash in the past 12 months, but in 2020 this shrunk to just 38% of donors. A closer analysis of habits in the spring of 2020 show that the proportion donating by cash in the past four weeks fell from 39% in February 2020 to 13% in April and only 9% in both May and June. The impact of the pandemic here is clear: being heavily dependent on face to face interactions, cash giving was much lower than usual during the whole of 2020, and the trend has continued into 2021 despite the gradual removal of restrictions.

Our analysis shows that when cash giving first saw a substantial decline, donors moved online. Donations made via contact-free or digital methods increased substantially during spring of 2020 when the country first went into lockdown. In March, 13% of donors gave via a website or app in the past four weeks and 11% had done so by debit card; by April these figures had increased to 24% and 25%. However, as shown in Figure 8, the increase in giving via a website or app was not sustained at this high level. Giving via a debit card, however, has remained elevated for much of 2021.

Figure 8: Proportion of donors each month giving by cash and by website/app



Base: All adults 16+ who have donated money in the past four weeks c. 350 per month (total n=11,173).

With Covid-19 restrictions in place, giving via other face-to-face methods also declined. The proportion of people who had bought goods for charity in the past 12 months fell significantly from 38% in 2019 to 35% in 2020, and the proportion buying a raffle or lottery ticket fell from 38% to 33%. With many events cancelled, the proportion giving at a fundraising event similarly declined.

Other forms of giving appear to have been unaffected by the pandemic. Although a small number of people reported stopping a regular payment to charity because they were concerned about their finances, the overall use of direct debit / standing orders (36%) remained consistent with previous years.

Similarly, the proportion of people who paid membership fees and subscriptions to charities was unchanged (16%). Of those who gave via membership fees and subscriptions, the vast majority (89%) continued to do so via direct debit or standing order. Around one in five (19%) did so by one off payment.

We continue to observe many of the common demographic trends noted for the different donation channels. Younger donors are much more likely to have donated via a website or app in the past 12 months than are older donors (38% of 25-34s vs 18% of over 65s), who are in turn more likely to have donated by direct debit / standing order (49% of over 65s vs a low of 14% of 16-24s) or via membership fees (21% of over 65s vs 7% of 16-24s). Whilst these historical trends remain, the results suggest that more older donors are donating with technology than previous years. The proportion of donors aged 65+ who gave via a website or app in the past 12 months increased from 14% in 2019 to 18% in 2020 and the proportion giving by debit card increased from 13% to 18%. Among donors aged 55-64, the increase is even clearer; 25% gave via a website or app in 2020 compared with 17% in 2019.

Donors who gave via a website or app in 2020 tended to do so through a third-party website such as JustGiving or Virgin Money Giving (61%); this is in line with previous years. Around half (49%) of online donors gave directly via the charity's website and 17% gave via social media.

Cash giving was much lower than usual during the whole of 2020, and the trend has continued into 2021





## 2.8 Being asked to give

Fewer people have been approached to give over the course of Covid.

In a typical year, on average nearly three quarters of people are approached and invited to give. This dipped in 2020 and continues to be lower than usual – by August 2021, only six in 10 people (61%) reported being asked to give.

Social distancing rules likely made in-person fundraising impossible for most charities. The number of people reporting being approached to donate via a door-to-door collection decreased in 2020, but had risen slightly by the end of summer 2021. The levels of street fundraising mirror the changes in face-to-face activity that occurred in response to the pandemic; the proportion who reported being approached to donate on the street was in line with the 2019 year average in February 2020 (34%), but by April of that year had declined significantly (13%). It then increased in August (17%) as coronavirus restrictions eased. A similar pattern has emerged during 2021.

**Donations are increasingly solicited from people when they are in a digital environment.**

The public are more likely to have been approached to donate via contact-free ways of fundraising. The proportion of people being asked to donate online had already been steadily increasing over the past few years, but in 2020 it jumped to 30% from 24% in 2019. However, it has dipped again in 2021, and stood at 23% by August of this year.

More people are being asked to donate online than in previous years and most online engagement is occurring on social media. Typically around six in 10 who were approached online said that this occurred on social media, although this had dropped to 50% in August 2021.

Among those contacted by direct mail, the proportion receiving physical mail has remained fairly constant at around eight in 10, but email contact increased over the course of the pandemic, peaking at 46% in April 2021.

## 2.9 Frequency of giving

Three in 10 people are regular givers. Women are more likely than men to give regularly.

The pandemic has not had much impact on the overall number of regular givers, although there is a small but persistent decline in the number of those who donate weekly which has continued until August 2021.

Across 2020 as a whole, around three in 10 (28%) people were regular givers, with 3% giving weekly and 25% giving monthly. Half (51%) of adults reported giving from time to time whilst one in seven (14%) give rarely.

Women were more likely to be regular givers (32% vs 24% of men) and the likelihood to give also increases by age group (39% of those aged 65+ vs. a low of 13% of 16-24s). ABC1 respondents more likely to give regularly than C2DEs (32% vs 23%).

### SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES LIKELY MADE IN-PERSON FUNDRAISING IMPOSSIBLE FOR MOST CHARITIES



61%

People being asked to give continues to be lower than usual. By August 2021, only six in 10 people (61%) reported being approached.



30%

The proportion of people being asked to donate online in 2020 jumped to 30% (Up from 24% in 2019).





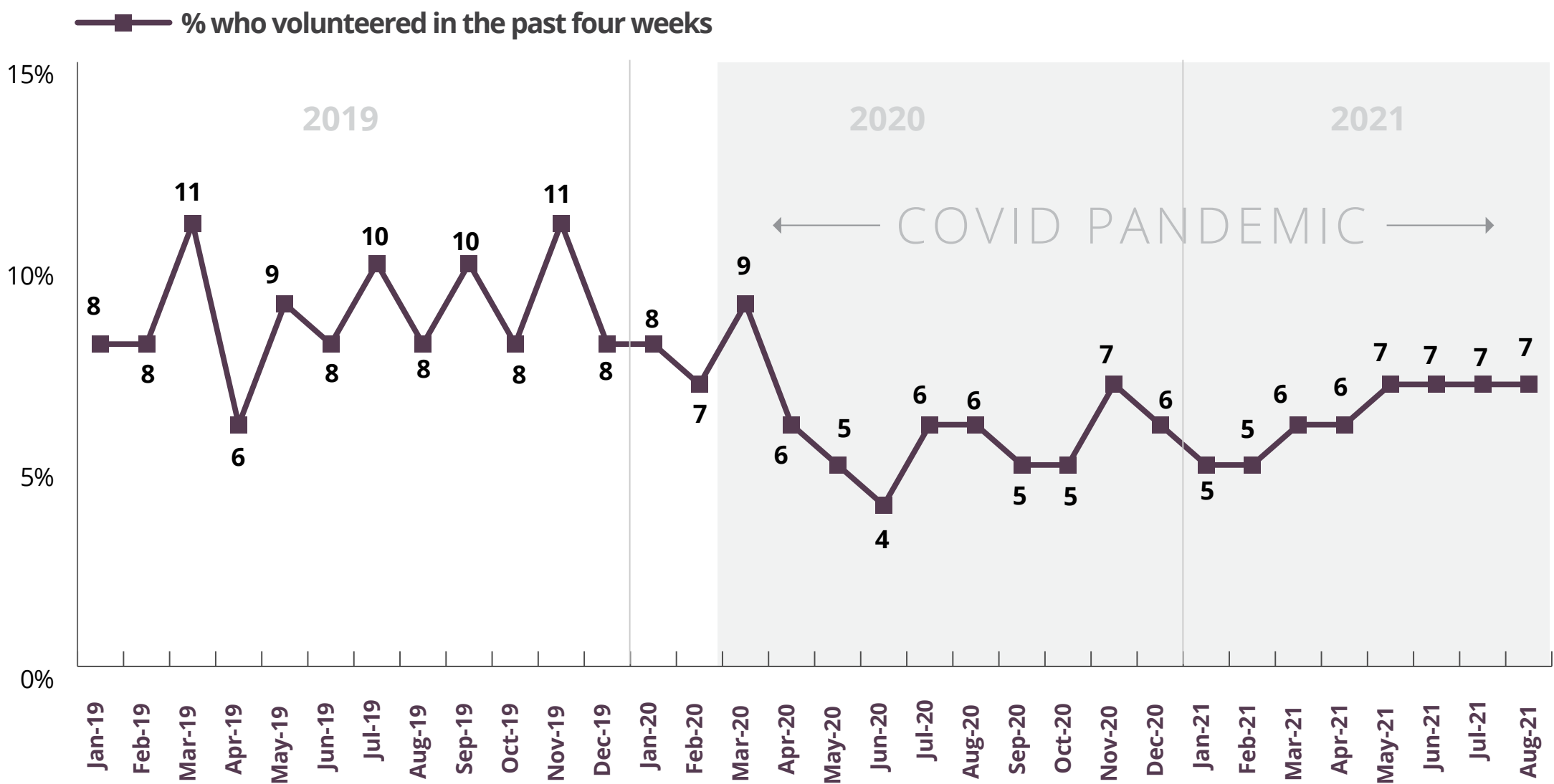
## 3.0 | Other ways people get involved



### 3.1 Volunteering

Fewer people volunteered than usual in 2020, but levels have remained relatively low during 2021 even as restrictions have lifted. Since volunteers are often older people, the order to shield for many senior citizens likely also played a role, and fears around contracting the virus may be a contributing factor to the continued low levels of volunteering. Women are more likely to have volunteered than men, and this is a pattern seen in previous years.

Figure 9: Which, if any of the following have you done in the past four weeks? (Volunteered for a charity)



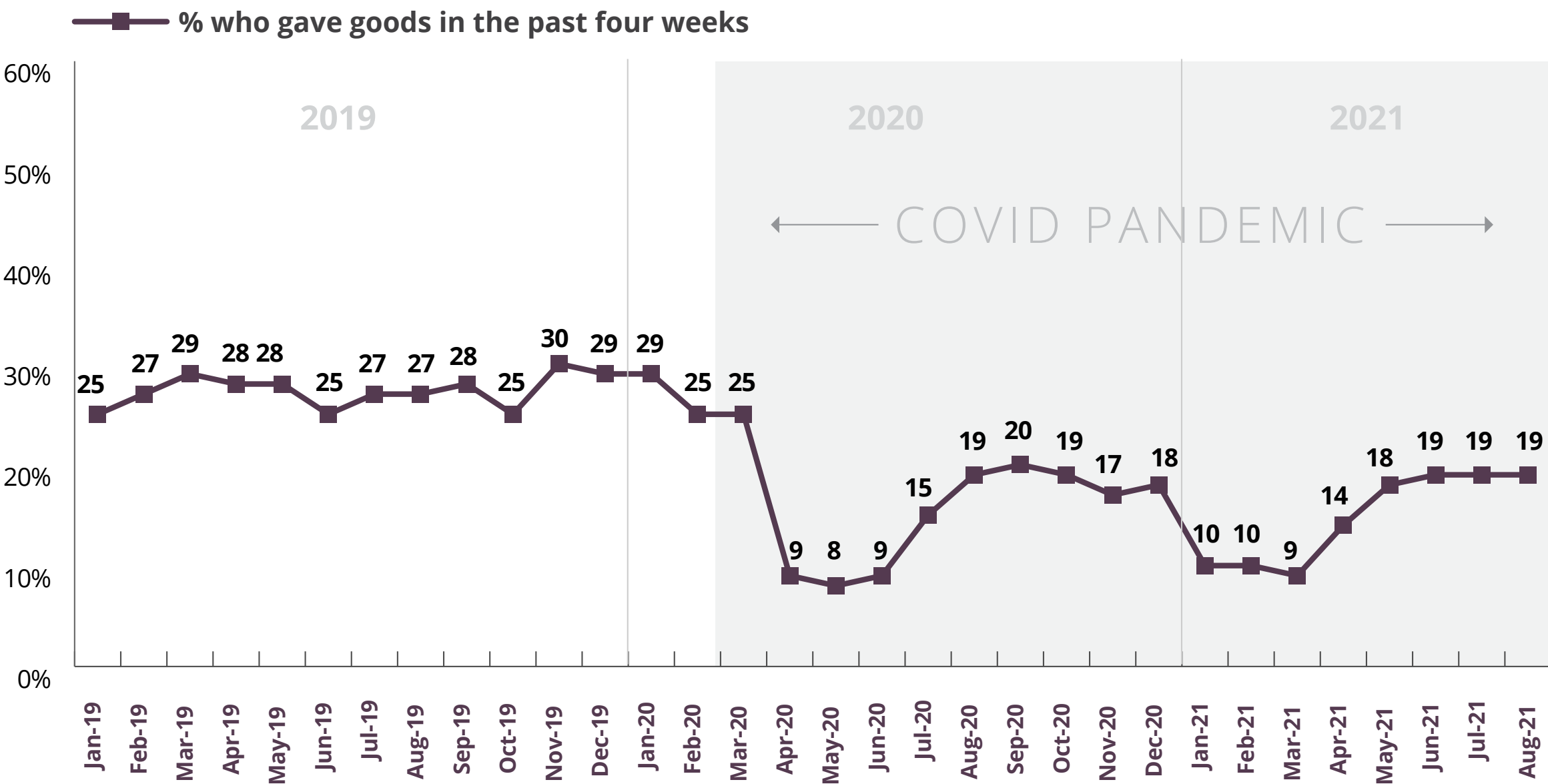
Base: all adults 16+ c. 1,000 per month (total 37,873).

### 3.2 Giving goods

2020 saw a drastic reduction in the overall number of people giving goods to charity, followed by large fluctuations throughout the course of the pandemic. The pattern correlates highly with the lockdown measures in England (see Figure 10). We suggest that donations to charity shops are likely to make up a large part of 'giving goods', and that the fluctuations are a reflection of the closure of non-essential retail at various points since the spring of 2020.

In 2021, giving goods has started to recover and has seen rates return to the peaks seen outside of lockdowns in 2020 (to a high of 19% in June 2021). However, rates have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Despite these issues, charity shops remain popular. In June, three-quarters (75%) of respondents in England said they were likely to donate items to a charity shop as they reopened after lockdown and half (49%) said they were likely to shop there.

Figure 10: Which, if any, of the following have you done in the past four weeks? (Given goods to charity)



Base: all adults 16+ c. 1,000 per month (total 37,873).





### 3.3 Protesting and petitioning

Across 2020 as a whole, over half (54%) of people reported signing a petition in the past 12 months and 7% said that they had taken part in a public protest, in line with 2019. This may reflect a number of high-profile campaigns which took place in the UK in 2020 for causes such as the Black Lives Matter movement, anti-lockdown movement, women's rights, trans rights, humanitarian crises and environmental causes. Levels of participation have dropped in 2021.

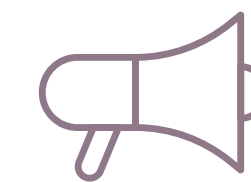
Petitions are more commonly signed by younger adults, with nearly two-thirds (64%) of 16-24s signing one in the past 12 months compared with 49% of those aged 65+. Younger age groups are also more likely to take part in protests, 11% of 16-34s have done so in the last year compared with an average of 6% of those aged 35+. As in previous years, those in London are most likely to have signed a petition (61%) or taken part in a protest (14%) in the past 12 months, likely reflecting London's younger than average population.

#### NEARLY TWO THIRDS OF YOUNG ADULTS SIGNED A PETITION IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



54%

Over half (54%) of people reported signing a petition in the past 12 months.



11%

11% of young people said they had taken part in a public protest, in 2020.





# 4.0 | Trust in charities





Trust in charities increased in 2020, and remains higher than pre-pandemic.

Trust in charities has significantly improved following a [well-documented decline in 2018](#). For 2020 as a whole, trust increased to the highest level seen since 2016 (when our survey began), from 50% to 54% of adults. In January 2021, it peaked at 60% of people, and remains elevated.

At the same time, disagreement that charities are trustworthy has been falling since 2017; in 2020, just one in five (16%) disagreed that charities are trustworthy with only 4% strongly disagreeing. It is likely that the enormous response of many charities to the coronavirus pandemic played a part in boosting the recovery of trust in the sector.

Men continue to be less likely to trust charities than women (52% men agree vs 57% of women) but both are more likely to trust charities than was the case in 2019 (48% men and 52% women).

The pandemic appears to have reversed a trend of declining trust among young adults. Trust fell steadily among the 16-24s from 57% in 2017 to 53% in 2019 but in 2020 more than three in five (62%) 16-24s now agree charities are trustworthy. In line with previous years, trust is higher among this age group than those aged 65+; in 2020, 53% of those aged 65+ agreed charities are trustworthy but this has increased since 2019 (49%).

Whilst all social grades are more likely than unlikely to find charities trustworthy, those from ABC1 social grades are more likely than those from C2DE social grades to do so. Three in five (60%) of those in ABC1 social grades trust charities compared with fewer than half (49%) of those in C2DE grades. Trust has increased across all social grades since 2019 when 55% of ABC1 and 44% of C2DEs agreed that most charities are trustworthy.

## TRUST IN CHARITIES HAS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED SINCE 2018



60%

In January 2021, trust in charities peaked at 60% of people



62%

Young adults (16-24) are more likely to trust charities than those aged 65+





# 5.0 | Method





CAF has been producing the UK Giving report since 2004, and has been tracking giving in the UK for several decades. Over time, there have been a number of changes to how the study is conducted in terms of approach and questions asked. CAF has run the UK Giving survey in its current guise since 2016. The survey is conducted online and collects responses from c. 1,000 people each month. This monthly approach enables us to capture changes in behaviour and attitudes at a granular level, including the ongoing impact of the pandemic on charitable giving across the country.

In this particular report, findings are based on the responses of c. 12,000, with a further c. 10,000 responses collected so far during 2021. The sample is constructed in such a way that it is nationally representative of the UK in terms of respondents' sex, age, region/nation and social grade.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The survey was carried out online and the figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 16+).





Registered charity number 268369



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