UK GIVING
March 2024

MAPPING GENEROSITY
ACROSS THE COUNTRY
THE UK IS A GENEROUS COUNTRY, AND THE FINDINGS FROM THIS REPORT SHOW HOW WE CAN COME TOGETHER, TO GIVE MORE TO CAUSES THAT MATTER TO US, EVEN WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH.

The act of giving connects us to one another in communities and across society: a more giving society can be one with a stronger social fabric.

But it’s concerning that our research continues to show we’re relying on a dwindling number of donors, and the typical donation is static and eroded by inflation. While we have tracked giving in some way or another for several decades, our UK Giving Report is now in its 20th year and is the largest and most detailed study of its kind. For the first time, we have mapped our research along the new parliamentary constituency boundaries, which also highlights that levels of generosity are uneven across the country.

For these reasons, we need to foster a more widespread and sustainable culture of giving to support charities that are squeezed from all sides. The vital next step is for government to harness charitable giving for every part of the UK, by committing to drawing up a national strategy for philanthropy and charitable giving, ideally as part of a renewed approach to the whole of civil society.

NEIL HESLOP OBE
Chief Executive
Charities Aid Foundation
The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) exists to accelerate progress in society towards a fair and sustainable future for all. We are a leading charity operating in the UK and internationally. Our giving and impact services help people and businesses support the causes they care about.

For charities, we provide tailored advice, fundraising tools and financial services, freeing them up to concentrate on the real work of making a difference. We also understand and influence the wider environment for charities and donors across the UK and beyond via our research, policy and campaigns work.

In 2024, CAF marks 100 years as an organisation at the centre of the giving world, distributing over £1 billion to charities around the world last year.

Together, we give more.
KEY FINDINGS

THREE-QUARTERS OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED CHARITIES LAST YEAR

Seventy-five per cent of adults did at least one charitable activity in the past 12 months, and nearly six in ten (58%) donated or sponsored.

THE PUBLIC DONATED AN ESTIMATED £13.9 BILLION TO CHARITY IN 2023

This was an increase from £12.7 billion in 2022, and was driven by some donors making larger donations, rather than by more people giving to charity.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, UK GIVING DATA REVEALS THE COUNTRY’S GENEROSITY HOTSPOTS

A statistical model has been used to project UK Giving results to all 650 UK parliamentary constituencies. We can now reveal which of these areas are the most generous.

SOME OF THE LEAST AFFLUENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY ARE AMONG THE MOST GENEROUS

People in Belfast West give four times more, as a proportion of their income, than people in Kensington and Bayswater. Overall, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are greatly over-represented in the country’s top 100 most generous constituencies.

£800 MILLION LESS WENT TO OVERSEAS AID AND DISASTER RELIEF CAUSES IN 2023

The total amount going to overseas aid and disaster relief halved in 2023, as donors supported the Turkey-Syria earthquake appeals, but not on the same scale as the levels of generosity seen following the invasion of Ukraine a year earlier.
THREE-QUARTERS OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED CHARITIES LAST YEAR.

SUPPORT FOR CHARITIES IS STABLE DESPITE THE PRESSURE ON HOUSEHOLD FINANCES.

Although giving levels have declined over the past few years, they did not deteriorate further during 2023, despite the high cost of living and a technical recession in the second half of the year.

In total, 75% of people did something charitable in the past 12 months, equivalent to more than 40 million people across the UK. This included 58% of people who donated or sponsored.

A core of around one million “Super Givers” supported charities in every single one of the five ways shown in Figure 1: donating, giving goods, sponsoring, volunteering, and fundraising.

Super Givers are more than twice as likely to be women, and most are aged over 45. Although many are retired or otherwise not working, more than two-fifths (43%) managed to fit in their support of charities around full-time employment.

Base: All respondents during 2023, N=13,164. Numbers of people calculations based on mid-2021 ONS population estimates. A total of 2% of our sample were identified as Super Givers, N=222.
HOW WE CHOOSE A CHARITY IS INFLUENCED BY OUR EXPERIENCES AND THE PEOPLE WE KNOW – FAR MORE SO THAN BY WHAT CHARITIES SAY.

THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR SUPER GIVERS.

Donors tend to find out about the charities that they support through either their own experience (32%), or via friends and family (28%). This trend hasn’t changed year on year.

The people who make up the core of Super Givers are especially likely to have discovered a charity in these ways (59% personal experience, and 44% through friends and family). They are also much more likely than average to have donated to set an example to others (25% vs. 9% average), to believe that we can all help to solve social problems (55% vs. 33% average), and to feel that they can make a difference (50% vs. 27% average).

Figure 2: How did you find out about the charities that you donated to?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Experience</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends &amp; Family</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researched/Read about Issue</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approached by Charity</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV or Radio Ad</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At an Event</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advert in Public Space</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All who donated in the past 12 months, N=7,139. ‘Other’ answers (11%) and ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ (12%) codes not shown.
PEOPLE RESPOND POSITIVELY TO DONORS TALKING ABOUT THEIR GIVING.

DESPITE THE PERSONAL NATURE OF FINDING OUT ABOUT CHARITIES, MOST PEOPLE (68%) DON’T TELL OTHERS WHEN THEY DONATE OR VOLUNTEER.

When donors did share, it was mainly to raise awareness for the cause (50%) and encourage others to donate (48%). For a fifth of these donors (21%), it was a sense of pride that encouraged them to talk about it. Only 4% admitted that it was to give a good impression of themselves.

When respondents were asked how they felt when others shared about their charitable giving, a third of people (32%) said it had made them feel pride and respect for the person, and 14% said they had felt inspired. Around one in ten (11%) had felt guilty that they should be doing more, while just under one in six (15%) said they felt the person was sharing to show off or for personal gain.

People in the South East were particularly likely to admit to feeling guilty in this scenario, whereas those in Yorkshire were most likely to feel the person doing the sharing was showing off. People in the East of England were the most likely to feel a sense of pride and respect for the sharer.

Q. When other people tell you about their charitable giving or activities (e.g. volunteering or doing a sponsored event), which of the following, if any, explain how this has made you feel/act? Base: All, N=1,090.
ACROSS ALMOST THE WHOLE COUNTRY, AT LEAST HALF OF PEOPLE DONATE TO CHARITY.

UK GIVING DATA REVEALS WHERE DONORS ARE CONCENTRATED AROUND THE COUNTRY.

For the first time, we have taken the c. 13,000 responses collected from the public during 2023 and used a statistical model to project our results to all 650 UK parliamentary constituencies.*

Each constituency in the UK is shaded according to the proportion of people who donated to charity. The darker colours indicate that more people in that constituency donated, while constituencies shown in paler colours or white are areas where fewer people donated.

In 98% of constituencies across the UK, at least half of people donated to charity in the past year. The 13 seats where less than 50% have donated to charity include some of the more deprived areas of the country: Glasgow North East, Birmingham Ladywood, Kingston upon Hull East, West Ham and Beckton, and Glasgow East.

Check the results for your local area with our interactive map. 

* Constituencies are based on the new boundary definitions that will be used at the next General Election.
THE PUBLIC DONATED AN ESTIMATED £13.9 BILLION TO CHARITIES IN 2023.

THE TOTAL AMOUNT DONATED BY THE PUBLIC IS UP MORE THAN A BILLION POUNDS SINCE 2022.

The increase was driven by some donors giving more on average, rather than by more people giving to charity.

The average (mean) monthly donation in 2023 was £65, approximately 40% higher than it had been before the pandemic (2019). Donations peaked in November 2023, when the average gift was more than £18 higher than the rest of the year. This coincided with a series of major charity campaigns that take place annually, including Movember, the Poppy Appeal, and Children in Need.
IS IT TIME TO UPDATE THE HABITS THAT GOVERN HOW MUCH WE DONATE?

While it is heartening that the average monthly donation increased in 2023, it masks a worrying trend:

THE TYPICAL DONATION TO CHARITY HASN’T INCREASED SINCE 2017.

While a mean average can be inflated by a smaller number of very large donations, the median average lines all donations up in size order and takes the middle amount. By this method, the typical monthly donation in 2023 was £20, unchanged for the seventh year in a row.

Although the country has moved away from cash for much of its spending, the amount that many people donate to charity appears to be ‘stuck’ at bank note denominations, with the most common donations being £20 (11% of donors), £10 (13% of donors), and £5 (8% of donors).

A number of factors might be driving this, including perceptions of what other donors do, the amounts that charities suggest as donations, and donors’ own historical habits (for example, long-held direct debits).

In total, three-quarters of donations are £50 or less, and 90% are under £100. Giving a donation of £500 or more to a single cause would put a donor in the top 1% of givers.

Figure 5. Percentage of donations falling into each band

According to analysis by Pro Bono Economics, if the typical donation had kept up with inflation, it would now be over £25.
**The Top Ten Contributors Gave Nearly a Quarter of a Billion Between Them.**

Figure 6. shows how the total estimated £13.9 billion breaks down across the country. The darker the red colour, the more that constituency tends to contribute.

Of the ten constituencies that give the most to charity in total, three are in Northern Ireland, one is in Scotland, and six are in London. Between them, they donated an estimated £230 million in 2023.

Religious giving is more widespread in Northern Ireland than elsewhere in the UK, which may go some way to explaining the region's generosity. Donations to religious causes are the highest of any cause, at £89 on average.
Some of the least affluent parts of the UK are among the most generous.

Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales are over-represented among the UK’s most generous constituencies.

Although the South East contributes a significant part of the total £13.9 billion donated by the British public, as a proportion of household income it is far less generous than other parts of the country.

In fact, some of the most deprived areas in the UK are among the most generous. Donors in Belfast West, one of the most deprived parts of Northern Ireland, give an average of 2.2% of their household income to good causes each year. In contrast, in Kensington and Bayswater, where the average house price is more than £2 million, people donate just 0.5% of their household incomes – the lowest in the whole country.
LONDON IS THE LEAST GENEROUS OF THE UK’S CAPITAL CITIES.

WHILE A HEALTHY PICTURE OF GENEROSITY EMERGES IN BELFAST, CARDIFF AND EDINBURGH, PEOPLE IN LONDON GIVE FAR LESS.

As a proportion of income, Londoners give the least, while those in Cardiff and Belfast give the most. On average, people in London donate 1.3% of their disposable income to good causes, while in Edinburgh it is slightly higher at 1.8%. Those in Cardiff and Belfast are the most generous, donating 2.1% and 2.5% of their incomes, respectively.
THE MORE TRUSTING A PLACE, THE MORE DONORS IT HAS – BUT DOES THAT TRANSLATE TO MORE GENEROSITY IN REAL TERMS?

A high level of trust in charities seems to go hand in hand with more donors. But while high-trust places give more as a group, this is as much a function of their relative affluence as it is their generosity.

Trust in charities has been slowly increasing in recent years, but still only around half of people (55%) across the country in 2023 agreed that charities are generally trustworthy.

Higher levels of trust are mainly limited to areas where people are more likely to donate but tend to give less as a proportion of their income.

The constituencies with the highest levels of trust donated more than double the amount contributed by the constituencies with the lowest trust levels (£97m vs. £46m). However, as a proportion of income, generosity levels between the two groups were similar.
The proportion of donations going to overseas aid and disaster relief (7%) halved from a high in 2022 (14%). This was despite a number of high-profile disasters and conflicts around the world, including earthquakes in Turkey, Syria and Morocco, and the conflict in Gaza.

In early 2023, there was a spike in donors giving to overseas aid and disaster relief causes – likely in response to the Turkey-Syria earthquake. However, the average gift was not as high as it had been in response to the invasion of Ukraine during the previous year. This means that, compared to 2022, around £800 million less went to overseas aid and disaster relief last year.

Most other cause areas received similar levels of support in 2023 as they had done in previous years. However, donations to charities that support disabled people increased in 2023, having declined during the pandemic.
FOR THE GOVERNMENT

DELIVER A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PHILANTHROPY AND CHARITABLE GIVING.

The Government should develop a strategy to set direction, bring together stakeholders and co-ordinate activity across government, business, and civil society in line with agreed national goals.

A co-ordinated approach is key for ensuring that partnership between the government, business and civil society drives positive social change in line with shared national priorities.

Such a strategy should encompass:

A) SUPPORTING LEVELLING UP THROUGH TARGETED INVESTMENT

Targeted government investment can support giving in the places that need it most. The Government should develop “Charitable action zones” in places where there is less charitable activity, matching donations targeted in these areas, as Onward has called for.

Government should act as an early-stage funder of such place-based giving schemes, bringing together residents, philanthropists, corporate donors, public sector organisations and civil society to raise money and address local priorities.

B) BUILDING CAPACITY

There is an important role for local leadership and local knowledge in shaping charitable activity. Local government should look at ways to ensure that local giving meets local needs. The Greater Manchester Mayor’s Charity is a notable example of this, with funding initiatives that tackle homelessness and rough sleeping across Greater Manchester.

Government should ensure that local authorities are appropriately resourced to support and facilitate philanthropy.

C) OFFERING MATCHED FUNDING

Matching all, or part of, a donation acts as an incentive for donors to give to charity. Government should offer match-funding, for instance, backing a proportion of donations to set up place-based giving networks.

Similarly, when departmental funding is scarce, government should seek out matched funding opportunities with philanthropists or corporate donors that can help multiply the impact of state funding and support charities to deliver greater impact on the ground.
FOR DONORS

1. ADJUST DONATIONS FOR INFLATION.

A donation of £20 to charity in 2017 would have needed to increase to more than £25 to enable the charity to buy the same amount of goods and services in 2024.

2. DONATE TO CORE COSTS.

At a time when inflation and rising costs are eroding the value of donations, charities need help to pay for the things that keep them going, such as staff costs, buildings, or keeping the lights on. Donors and funders can sometimes be sceptical about the value of this type of donation, even though it is essential to supporting charity resilience. NPC’s State of the Sector research found that 87% of charities wanted funders to offer more core funding.

3. TALK TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT GIVING.

Though most people don’t talk about their giving with others, it can be a powerful way to encourage others to donate to the causes that matter. Our research shows that only personal experience was more important than family and friends for helping people to find out about charities.

FOR CHARITIES

1. MAKE THE MOST OF DATA.

It’s important for charities to understand the geography of their donor base and charitable spending. Where possible, charities should explore if there are areas of the country where fundraising could be targeted, or pockets of untapped generosity. National charities should consider where they are distributing funding. They should investigate how far this aligns with the geography of need.

2. HARNESS THE POWER OF CONNECTION.

Local connection is a powerful motivator for giving. For local charities, connections are key – reaching out to those who may have moved away but still retain a strong connection to their hometown is a great way to encourage place-based giving and create a network of support. The example of the Made in Stoke network shows how bringing together charities, donors and local leaders in a community can be very powerful in connecting people and supporting them to give back.

3. SUPPORT LOCAL CHARITIES IN HIGH NEED AREAS.

National charities should consider partnering with local charities that have similar causes in areas with higher need. Centre for Cities have proposed “Levelling up charity partnerships,” which would bring together national charities with local partners focussing on targeted priorities.
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 form since 2016.

The survey is conducted online and collects responses from around a thousand people each month. This monthly approach enables us to capture changes in behaviour and attitudes at a granular level, including the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on charitable giving across the country.

In this report, findings for the calendar year 2023 are based on the responses of 13,164 individuals, unless otherwise indicated. 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 UK adults (aged 16+).

A statistical technique known as Multilevel Regression and Poststratification (or MRP) was used to create the constituency-level maps. It is a method for adjusting public opinion poll results to account for any imbalance between the survey sample and the population in each constituency and is often used to predict election results by seat.