

Press release: Young people are savvier and more generous when giving to charity at Christmas

New research from the Charity Commission and the Fundraising Regulator highlights the generosity of the British public at Christmas – and suggests that younger people are savvier about the charities they donate to than other age groups.

44% of 18 – 24 year olds said that they would give up their smartphones for the month of December to raise £500 for a charity of their choice. This is compared with under a third of the rest of the population. Youngsters also intend to make the highest financial donation to charity this Christmas, with an average pledge of £31.29.

This generosity is backed up by a strong awareness among that age group about the importance of making basic checks on a charity before giving, suggesting that young people are making informed choices about who they give to. Over half of young people said that they usually do checks on a charity before donating to them, compared with just 29% of over 75s.

The Commission is reminding the public that its online register holds a wide range of information about charities, including who sits on their trustee board, how they spend their money and whether the charity is or has been formally investigated by the Commission.

Helen Stephenson CBE, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission, said:

This research shows that Christmas remains a time of generous charitable giving, and that is to be celebrated. I'm particularly pleased that young people give generously, but also that they are more likely to make basic checks before giving to their chosen charity than people from their parents' generation.

This hints at a welcome shift in the public's relationship with charities and shows why charities should be open and transparent about the way they are run and how they spend their money. By doing so they can encourage donors' trust and generosity.

The research finds that the most common way people check before giving is to perform an internet search, followed by looking for a registered charity number. Donors can perform more substantial checks by looking at the Commission's register, or checking that they comply with the Fundraising Regulator's guidance and Code of Fundraising Practice.

For those wanting to limit unwanted communications from charities, the Fundraising Preference Service is a popular choice, with 28% of people surveyed saying they would use it to opt out from fundraising requests.

Brits still overwhelmingly prefer to give money directly to street collectors, and 1 in 10 respondents said that they have been approached to give money to charities that they did not know.

Stephen Dunmore, Chief Executive of the Fundraising Regulator said:

The British public are generous givers but the research shows a surprisingly high number of people who give without checking where their donation is going. It's important for donors to remember that they are entitled to know what their donations are being used for and to consent (or not) to the ways in which their personal data will be used.

Donors can also exercise control over which charities contact them and by what methods. The Fundraising Preference Service puts members of the public in the driving seat and, having launched the service just 6 months ago, it's good to see so many of the public already aware of how to use the service as a last resort where they need to stop unwanted communications from named charities.

The research also found that:

- health/medicine and children are the most popular causes to support this Christmas
- women are more likely to support charity than men this Christmas
- the most popular way to support charity this year is to buy charity Christmas cards
- 67% of Brits are more likely to support a charity that has affected them personally

Helen Stephenson added:

Charitable giving is a unique national tradition that we should be proud of. This year we have seen brilliant generosity from the British public and we want this to continue over the festive period – but continue safely, with a 'check by default' mentality among donors.

Safer giving street donation tips

1. Check the charity has a charity registration number and verify this on the Charity Commission's online register.
2. Ask to see the collector's ID badge.
3. Check the collector has a licence to fundraise with the local authority

or has the consent of the private site owner.

4. Check that the charity follows the Fundraising Regulator's guidance and Code of Fundraising Practice.
5. Ensure the collection device is sealed and fundraising materials are in a good condition.

Safer giving online donation tips

1. Check the charity has a charity registration number and verify this on the Charity Commission's online register.
2. Be wary of unsolicited emails from charities you've never heard of or have no association with.
3. Don't click on links on emails – instead search online for your chosen charity to check you have the right web address and donate directly to them.
4. Check there is a padlock symbol in the URL bar and that the web address starts with 'https'.
5. Ensure the charity is genuine before divulging any financial information and never share your pin number. If donors suspect that a collection or appeal is not legitimate, they should report it to the police or Action Fraud.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. The survey was conducted online from 15 – 17 November by ICM Unlimited, with a sample of 2000 people weighted to reflect the population.
2. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
3. The Fundraising Regulator is the independent regulator of charitable fundraising. It was established following the Etherington review of fundraising self-regulation to strengthen the system of charity regulation and restore public trust in fundraising.
4. Charities with an annual income of less than £5,000 do not have to register with the Charity Commission.