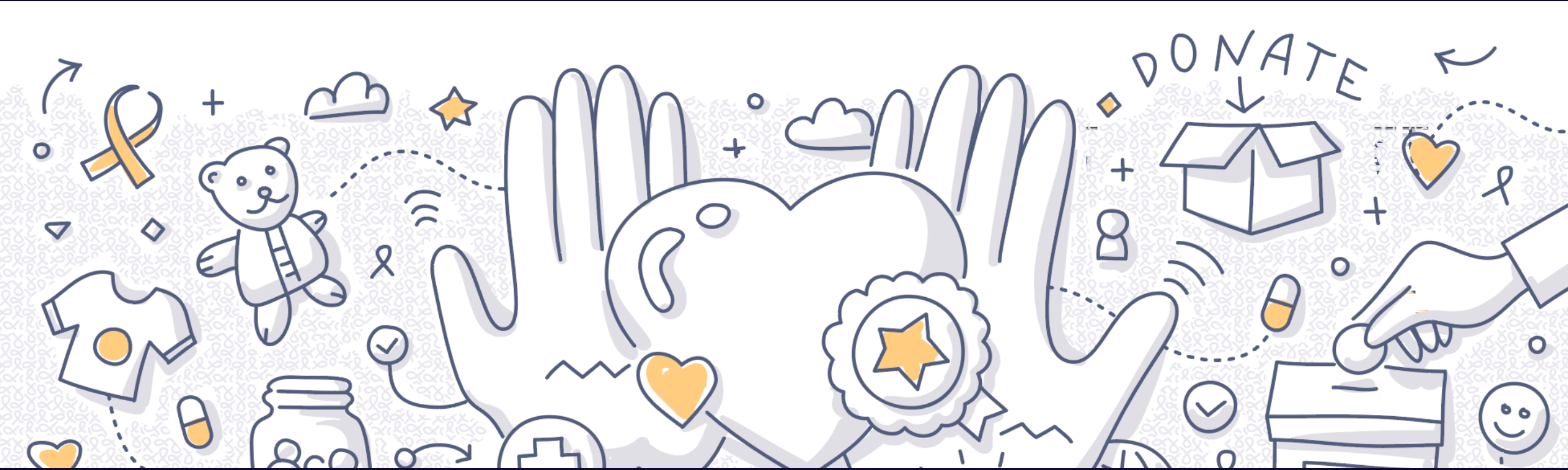


Charity industry SEO report

2023



Contents

Charity industry statistics & search insights	3-6
Top keyword variations	7-15
UK's favourite charities	16
5 stages of the digital donation cycle	17
Top ranking websites	18-24
What charity donors want	25-32
Next steps for charities	33
Contact us for help	34



Charity industry statistics

£51.4bn

The UK charity market was forecast to generate £51.4bn by the end of 2022 at a growth rate of 9.5%.

[Source](#)

168,993

Data from Gov.uk counts 168,993 main charities in England and Wales with a further 14,902 linked charities.

[Source](#)

79%

of charities in the UK generate less than £100k annual income with 61% earning less than £50k and 47% less than £10k per year.

[Source](#)

-2.6%

The UK charity industry has declined 2.6% on average between 2017 and 2022.

[Source](#)



Charity industry insights

UK charities hurt by Covid-19 pandemic

91% of charities negatively affected by Covid-19

According to a [Gov.uk survey](#), 91% of charities in England and Wales say they were negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

60% of charities lost income as a result of Covid-19

A majority of charities report losing income during the pandemic with 57% postponing events and 49% losing income from fundraising.

49% benefit from better use of technology

49% of charities that adapted their strategy in response to Covid-19 say they have benefitted from the better use of technology.

	Decrease	Slight decrease	No difference	Slight increase	Significant increase	N/A
Charitable activities	40%	19%	14%	4%	3%	16%
Other trading activities	28%	11%	11%	2%	<2%	45%
Donations & legacies	21%	18%	25%	8%	5%	21%
Other	9%	6%	21%	2%	3%	46%
Investments	9%	11%	25%	3%	<2%	50%

Charity industry insights

Small charities need to stay ahead of trends

Small charities generated 52% of income from the general public

[The latest report from Small Charities Data](#) shows charities generate over half of their revenue from the general public (2018/19).

Smaller charities need to stay ahead of changing donor trends

Given their reliance on donations from the general public, smaller charities have to adapt to changing habits faster than larger organisations.

Disruption hurts smaller charities the most

With limited cash reserves, smaller charities are more vulnerable to disruptions caused by Covid-19, the cost-of-living crisis and economic downturns.

Income sources for small charities, 2018/19 (%)

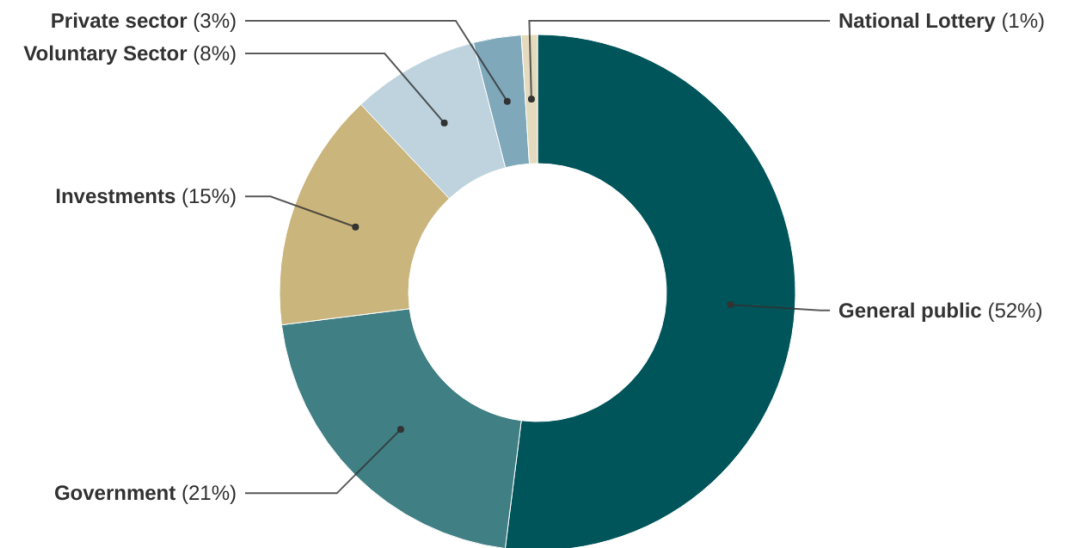


Chart: Small Charities Data • Source: NCVO • Created with Datawrapper

Charity industry insights

UK donation habits post-pandemic

People in the UK donated £11.3 billion to charities in 2020

Charity donations increased in 2020 with people in the UK giving £11.3 billion to organisations, up from £10.6 billion the previous year.

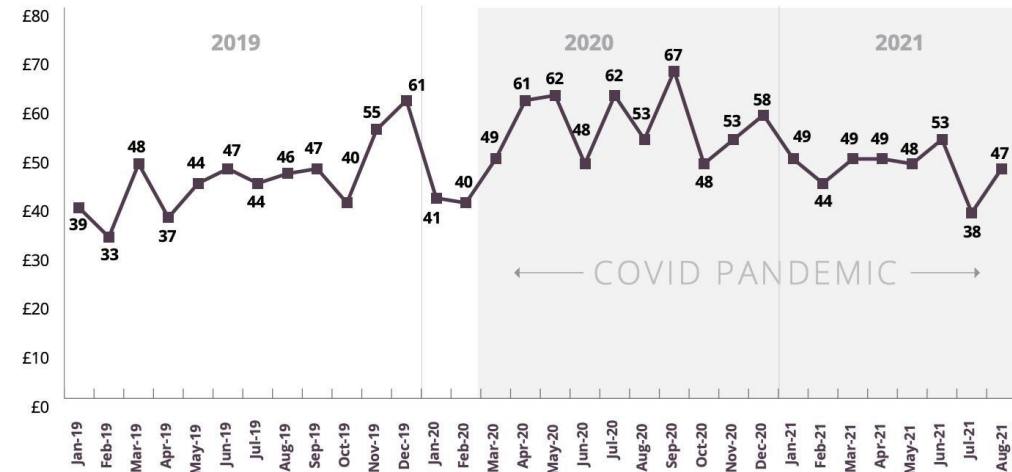
Fewer people donated in 2021 but those who did donated more

Although fewer people in the UK are donating post-pandemic, average donation values remained higher than pre-pandemic for most of 2021.

Animal welfare is the UK's most popular charity cause

More than a quarter of UK donors (27%) gave to animal causes in 2020.

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).

Top keyword variations for charity

Demand for charity shops is high

Charity shops play a crucial role in donations, purchases and funding with demand increasing during difficult times.

Donors want to learn more about charities

High search volumes for The Charity Commission suggest donors want to learn more about specific organisations.

People in the UK want to get involved

“Charity jobs” is the fourth most-searched keyword variation, showing plenty of people in the UK want to play an active role.

	Keyword	Volume	KD %
1	Charity shops near me	110,000	62%
2	Charity commission	90,500	81%
3	Charity shop	90,500	76%
4	Charity jobs	60,500	70%
5	Charity shops	40,100	73%
6	Charity	33,100	98%
7	Charities	22,200	96%
8	Charities commission	22,200	78%
9	Charity shield	18,100	50%
10	Charity shop sue	18,100	42%

Top keyword variations for charity shop

Local SEO is vital for charity shops

The “near me” search for charity shops and relatively low keyword difficulty illustrate the importance of local search.

Audience targeting matters for charity shops

Charity shops need to deliver targeted messages to people looking to buy, donate and work for organisations.

Furniture charity shops are in-demand

Charity furniture shops are the most in-demand – for donors and buyers.

	Keyword	Volume	KD %
1	Charity shops near me	110,000	62%
2	Charity shop	90,500	76%
3	Charity shops	40,500	73%
4	Charity shop near me	12,100	66%
5	Charity shop online	8,100	64%
6	Online charity shop	8,100	64%
7	Charity shop furniture near me	6,600	57%
8	Charity shops online	6,600	64%
9	Charity furniture shop near me	5,400	59%
10	Charity furniture shops	5,400	48%

From search to charity donation

Online donations more common since pandemic

Covid-19 accelerated online donation trend

Cash donations were already declining before the pandemic but Covid-19 pushed the switch to online donations.

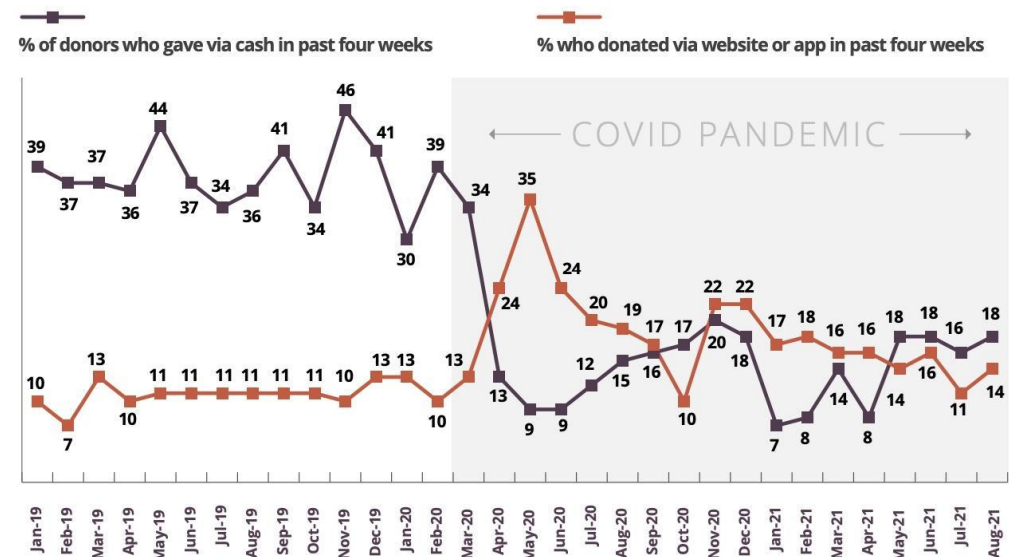
Charities need to adapt to digital payments

This is especially important now that Millennials and Gen Z donate more than other age demographics.

Contactless payments spur spontaneous donations

Contactless payment points have [driven higher spontaneous donations in several trials.](#)

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).

Top keyword variations for donation

Ukraine is a top concern for UK donors

Despite the domestic challenges people in the UK face, the crisis in Ukraine remains a top concern for donors.

People are keen to donate clothes

Three of the top ten searches include keyword variations for clothing donations.

Location matters to physical donors

For people donating physical goods like clothes and furniture, location is a major convenience factor.

	Keyword	Volume	KD %
1	Donate to Ukraine	9,900	86%
2	Donate	6,600	70%
3	Donation	5,400	75%
4	Donations	5,400	75%
5	Clothes donations near me	3,600	51%
6	Donate clothes near me	3,600	51%
7	Donating to Ukraine	3,600	78%
8	Donations for Ukraine near me	3,600	59%
9	Ukraine donations	3,600	86%
10	Where can I donate clothes for for Ukraine refugees near me	3,600	54%

Top keyword variations for donation (excluding Ukraine)

People are keen to donate clothes

If we remove recent concerns about the Ukraine invasion, half of the top 10 queries specify clothing donations.

Givers open to new causes

The top three queries suggest donors are actively seeking causes (as seen with the Ukraine crisis).

The cause is more important than the brand

Only one charity is named in the top 10 queries, suggesting the cause is more important than the brand.

	Keyword	Volume	KD %
1	Donate	6,600	70%
2	Donation	5,400	75%
3	Donations	5,400	75%
4	Clothes donations near me	3,600	51%
5	Donate clothes near me	3,600	51%
6	Clothing donation near me	2,900	51%
7	Salvation Army donation	2,900	66%
8	Where can I donate clothes for refugees near me	2,900	53%
9	Clothes donations	2,400	54%
10	Charity donation	1,900	73%

How people in the UK support Ukraine

People want to show support for Ukraine on social media

38% of respondents in [a YouGov survey](#) said they had shared or liked a post on social media to show support for Ukraine.

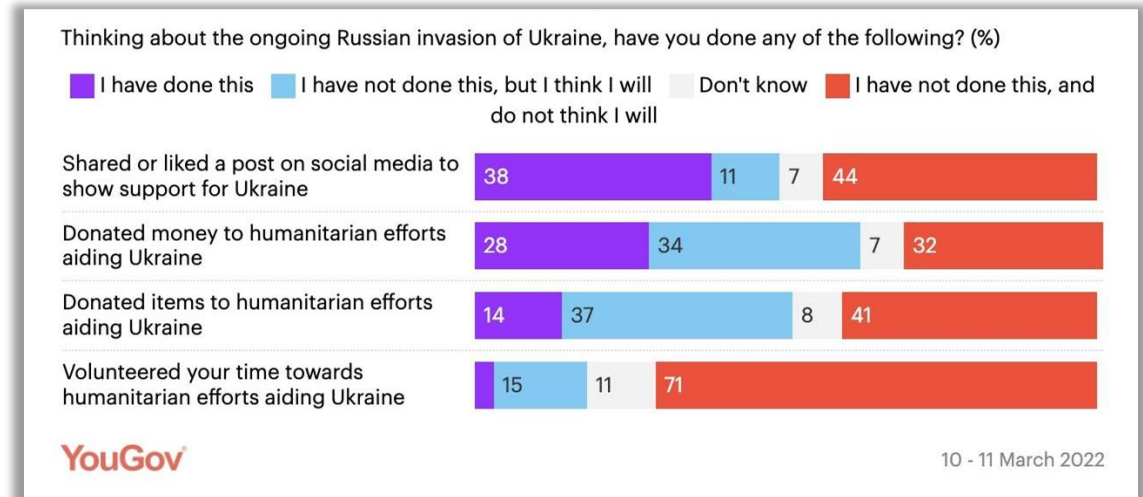
62% have or plan to donate money to humanitarian efforts

28% of respondents have already donated to humanitarian efforts to support Ukraine and a further 34% planned to in 2022.

51% have or plan to donate items to humanitarian efforts

14% have donated items to humanitarian efforts to support Ukraine and a further 37% planned to.

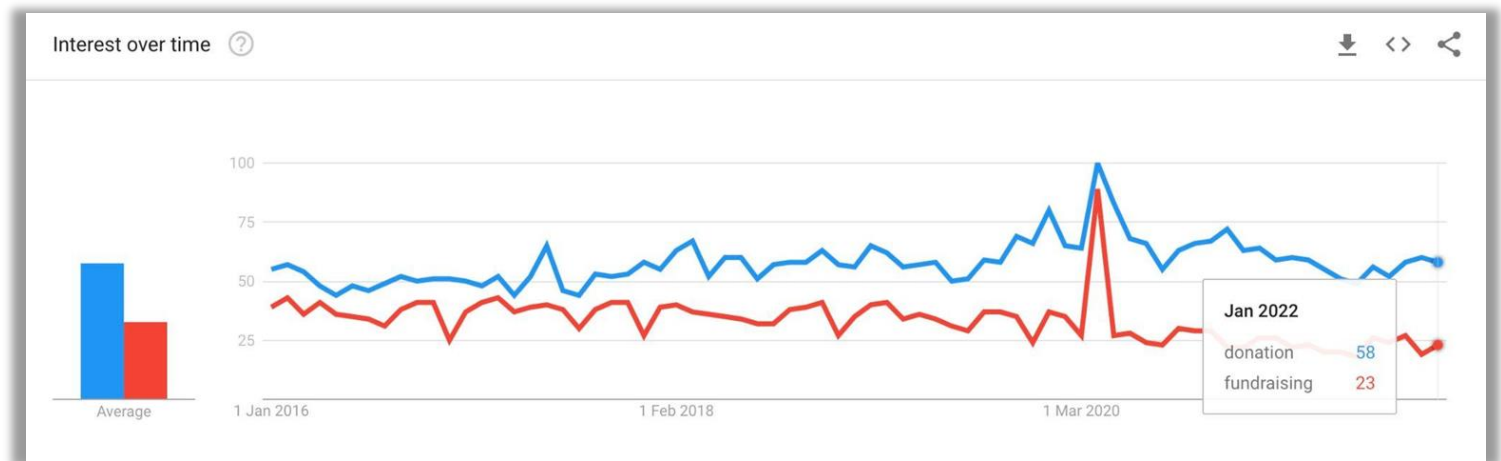
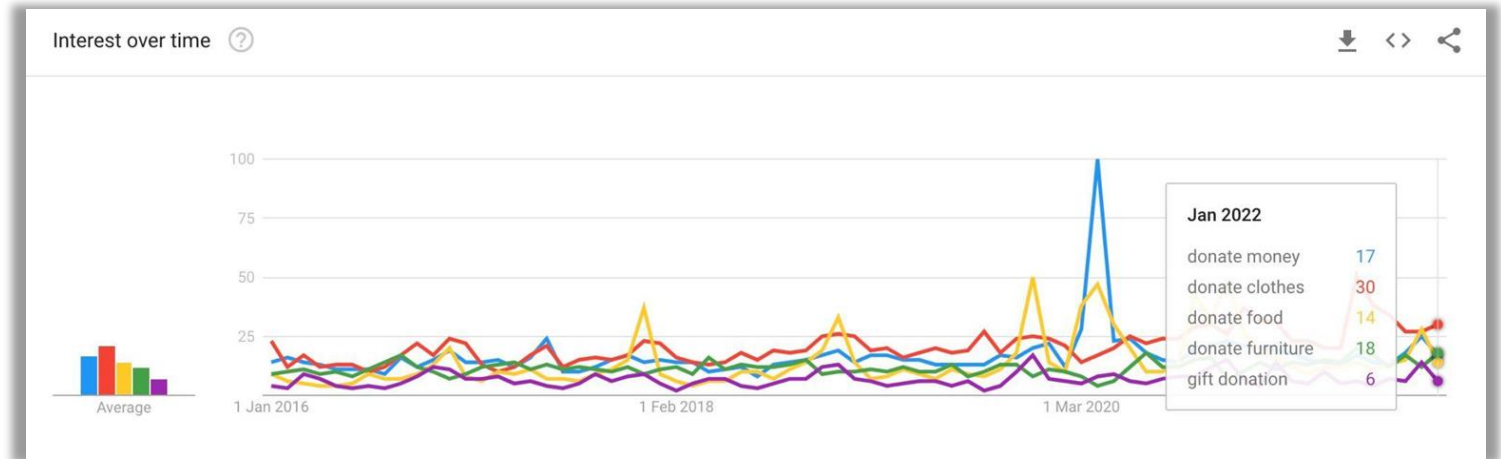
How many Britons have donated money, goods or time to humanitarian efforts aiding Ukraine?



Donation and fundraising preferences

From 2016-2022, search data suggests clothing donations are the most popular form of giving in the UK.

Searches for food donations typically spike during the festive period overtaking other forms of giving. Over the same period, search interest in donations is consistently higher than fundraising.



What causes do donors care about the most?

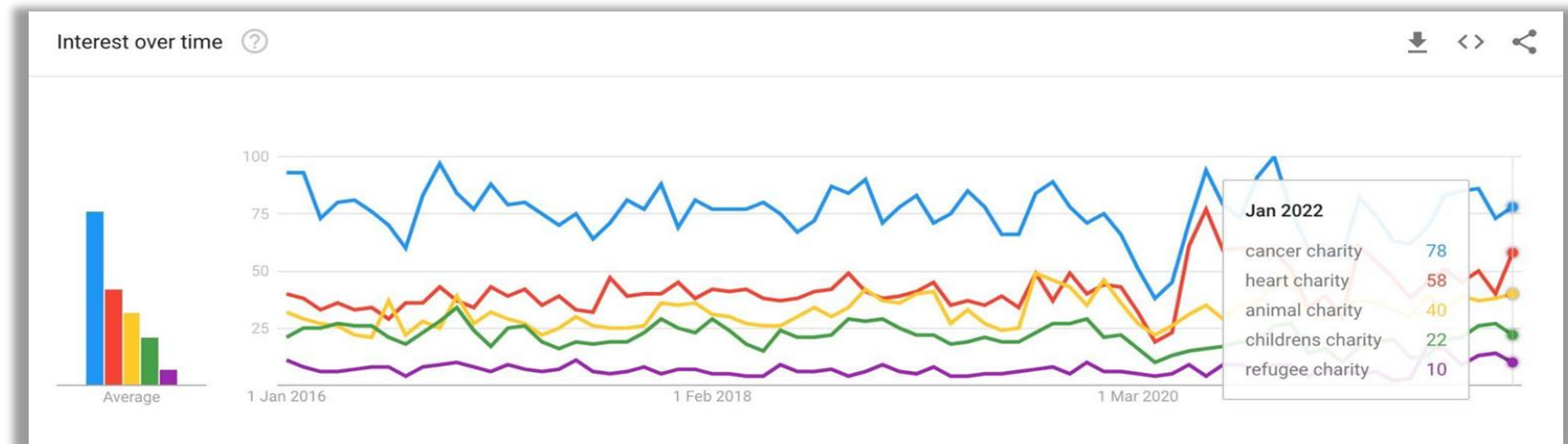
[Google Trends data](#) shows that **cancer charities** are a priority for donors in the UK.

[The Donor Pulse Report: Winter 2021](#) lists

“**support/research into disease**” as the top cause for charity donors in the UK.

Animal charities occasionally fall behind medical causes but remain a top priority for donors in the country.

	Autumn 2020	Winter 2020	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Autumn 2021	Winter 2021
Support/research into disease	27%	28%	28%	30%	35%	33%
Animal	29%	34%	32%	30%	31%	30%
Children	21%	26%	27%	32%	29%	28%
NHS/public health	35%	32%	31%	33%	28%	28%
Mental Health	15%	24%	23%	30%	26%	26%
Poverty eg foodbanks, homelessness	19%	21%	27%	24%	25%	25%
Local/community causes	14%	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%
Older people	10%	14%	12%	14%	15%	13%
Environment	12%	14%	12%	14%	16%	12%
Overseas aid	10%	10%	10%	13%	14%	10%
Education	6%	7%	9%	13%	10%	9%
Faith	6%	7%	8%	9%	9%	8%
Arts and Culture	4%	5%	5%	4%	6%	6%
Other <small>(Includes: Armed forces / veterans, lifeboats, hospices, air ambulance / rescue, salvation army)</small>	4%	4%	8%	6%	5%	7%



Top keyword variations for cancer charity

Breast cancer is a priority concern

Two of the top 10 keywords specify “breast cancer” which may signify interest but also awareness.

High keyword difficulty for keywords related to “cancer charity”

The average keyword difficulty for keywords related to “cancer charity” is 68.9% vs. 55.6% for “clothes donation”.

Almost 3x fewer monthly searches than “clothes donation”

The top 10 keywords for “cancer charity” average 1,027 monthly searches compared to 2,910 for “clothes donation”.

	Keyword	Volume	KD %
1	Cancer charities	2,400	94%
2	Breast cancer charity	1,300	72%
3	Cancer charity	1,300	75%
4	Cancer research charity shop	1,300	68%
5	Children’s cancer charity	1,000	54%
6	Prostate cancer charity	720	67%
7	Beatson cancer charity	590	42%
8	Breast cancer charities	590	66%
9	Cancer charities UK	590	86%
10	Bowel cancer charity	480	65%

The UK's favourite charities

British Heart Foundation the most popular charity

[According to YouGov data](#), the British Heart Foundation is the most popular charity among all adults in the UK.

Cancer Research UK the most known charity

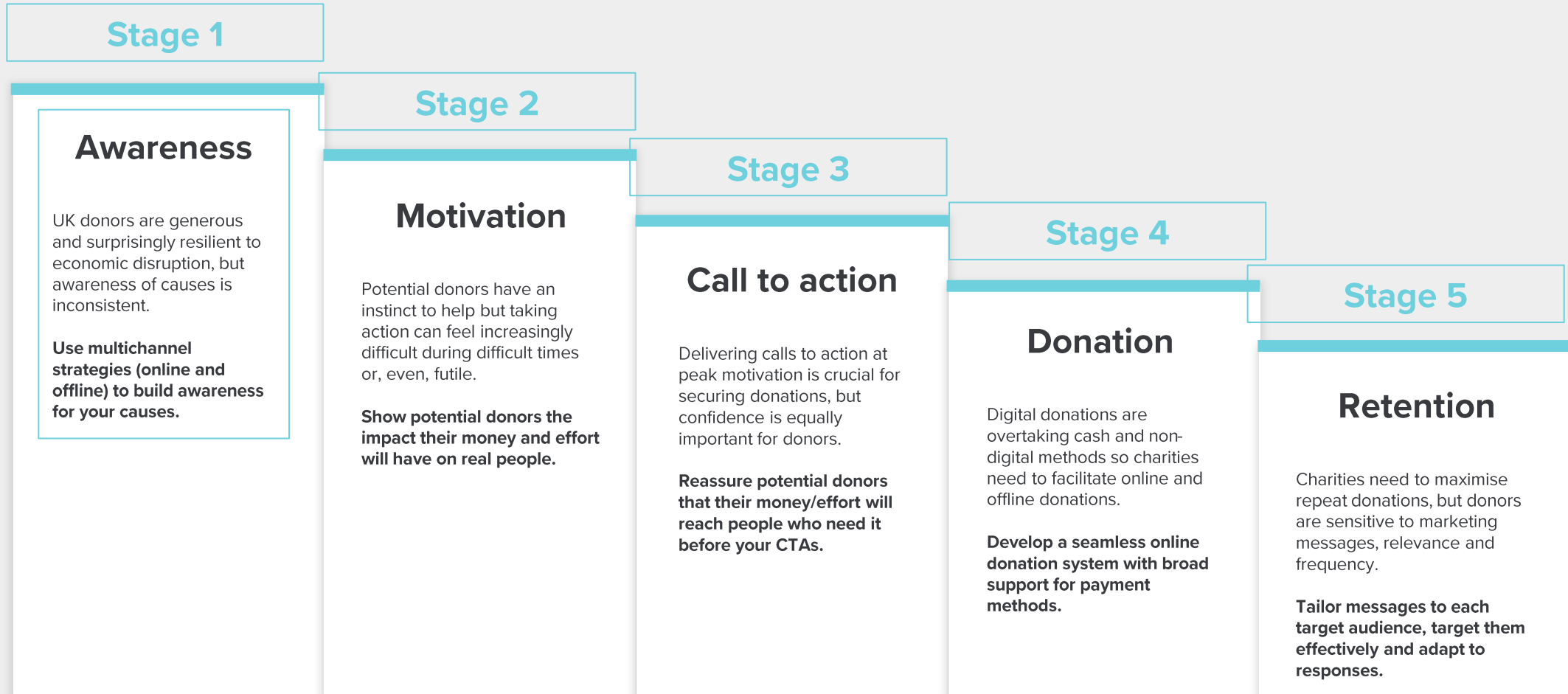
Cancer Research UK is the most known charity among adults and the most popular for Millennials.

British Red Cross most popular among men

British Red Cross is the most popular charity among UK males while the British Heart Foundation tops the list for women.

			Fame	Popularity
1		British Heart Foundation	96%	85%
2		Cancer Research UK	99%	83%
3		Macmillan Cancer Support	95%	83%
4		British Red Cross	97%	83%
5		St John's Ambulance	96%	82%
6		Marie Curie	96%	81%
7		Great Ormond Street	93%	80%
8		Guide Dogs	93%	79%
9		RSPCA	97%	79%
10		Samaritans	95%	75%

The 5 stages of the digital donation cycle





What Google wants...

Top ranking websites for charity

Charity Commission takes the top spot

Earlier, we saw high search volumes for the Charity Commission and it ranks in position 1 for the keyword “charity,” generating the most traffic from this keyword.

Mind.org.uk is the top-ranking charity

With a strong Authority Score, the strongest link profile and most target keywords, Mind.org.uk is the top-ranking charity.

Performance issues hurting Stepchange.org?

Scores well for AS, backlinks and keywords and generates plenty of traffic but ranks lower than many competitors.

	AS	Backlinks	Keywords	Organic traffic
gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission	80	416.2K	1.9K	103.4K
mind.org.uk	82	450.6K	15.8K	89.7K
register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk	69	13.9K	528	14.4K
oxfam.org.uk	77	55.4K	2.6K	69.2K
turn2us.org.uk/	78	78.8K	3.1K	48.2K
charityjob.co.uk	66	11.1K	1.5K	89.2K
dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/charity	54	163	54	2.3K
redcross.org.uk	83	383.8K	9.8K	77.3K
crisis.org.uk	77	11.8K	1.1K	23.3K
stepchange.org	84	75.4K	4.4K	92K

Top ranking websites for charity shop

Backlinks making the difference for Oxfam

With the strongest backlink profile, Oxfam’s online jumps to the top of results pages for this query.

Brand power may be generating more traffic for the British Heart Foundation

Earlier, we looked at [YouGov data](#) showing the British Heart Foundation is the most popular charity in the UK, which could explain the higher traffic volume from this keyword.

E-E-A-T & YMYL key for charity shops

[Google’s quality guidelines](#) are especially strict for transactional pages and even more so for charities and non-profits.

	AS	Backlinks	Keywords	Organic traffic
onlineshop.oxfam.org.uk/	64	27.9K	6.5K	91.6K
bhf.org.uk/shop	50	514	14.7K	113.1K
redcross.org.uk/shop	45	1.3K	375	14.6K
charityretail.org.uk/find-a-charity-shop	55	707	384	44.2K
thriftify.co.uk	45	527	289	9.5K
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charity_shop	55	769	170	3.6K
salvationarmy.org.uk/charity-shops	34	236	2.8K	23.2K
england.shelter.org.uk/support_us/shops	21	87	415	4.5K
cancerresearchuk.org/get-involved/ways-to-shop	52	5.9K	178	4.8K
ageuk.org.uk/services/charity-shops	19	67	977	14.7K

AS = Authority Score

Top ranking websites for donate online

Justgiving.com & Gofundme.com winning traffic

Fundraising sites Justgiving.com and Gofundme.com generate the most traffic from “donate online” with 219K and 64.5K monthly visitors respectively.

Save The Children doing well from search

Unlike most brand names, Save the Children generates most of its traffic from search (35.5%) and referrals (29.85%) instead of direct.

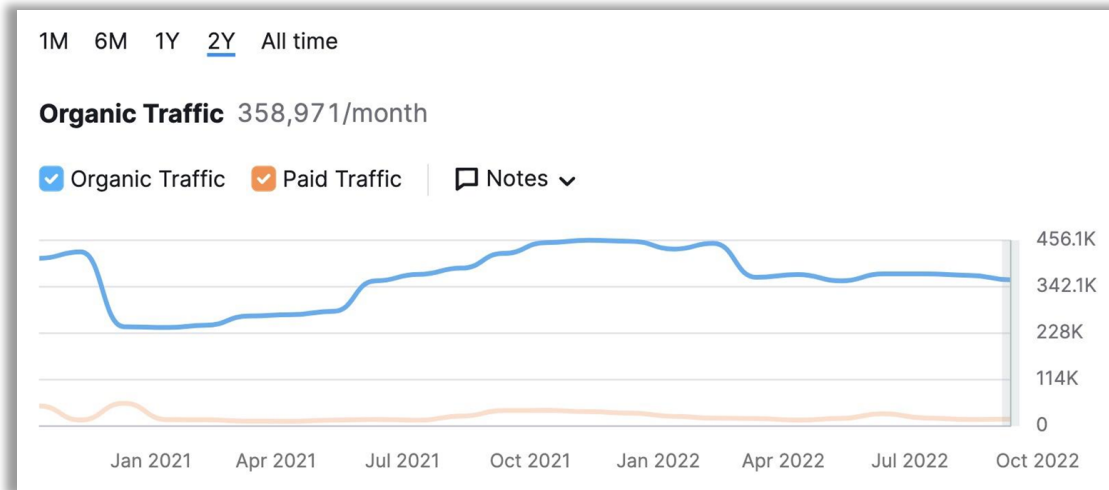
Save The Children & Oxfam outrank many rivals

Despite weaker profiles, Save The Children and Oxfam outrank many rivals, possibly due to satisfying YMYL criteria - eg: showing visitors how their donations are spent.

	AS	Backlinks	Keywords	Organic traffic
savethechildren.org.uk/donate	56	544	184	6K
unicef.org.uk/donate	76	668.2K	349	2.3K
justgiving.com	89	364.1K	1.2K	219K
oxfam.org.uk/donate	42	271	173	1.3K
mind.org.uk/donate	61	1.6K	363	6.2K
gofundme.com/en-gb	59	659	1K	64.5K
nspcc.org.uk/support-us/ways-to-give/donate	59	888	170	584
cancerresearchuk.org/get-involved/donate	59	7.1K	324	5.5K
rspca.org.uk/getinvolved/donate/online	67	888	141	2.8K
redcross.org.uk/get-involved/donate	51	3.6K	243	3.1K

Analysis: Oxfam.org.uk

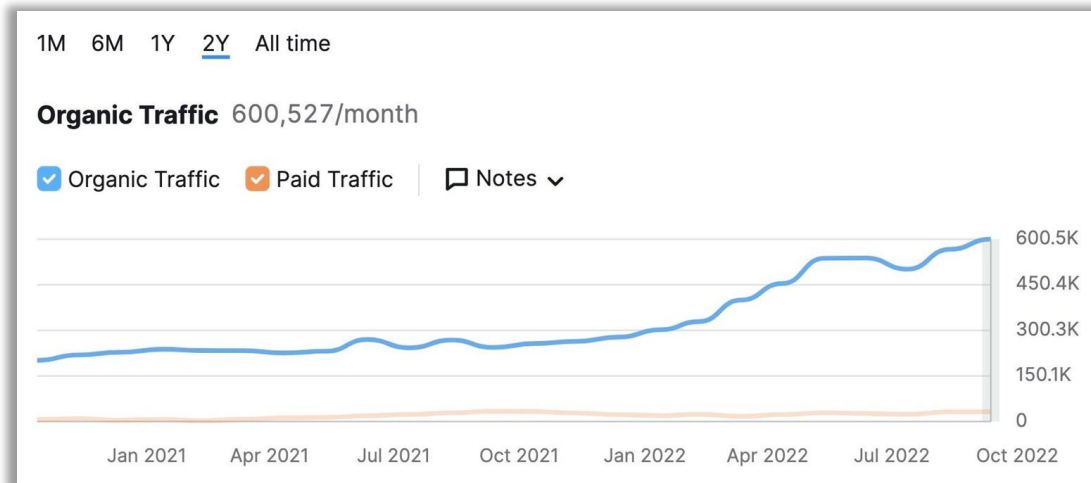
Oxfam’s brand name is searched 74K times every month with “oxfam online” and “oxfam books” adding another 47.9K. It ranks in position #1 for the top-level keywords “charity shop” and “charity shops” and generates 12.2% of its organic traffic from commercial and transactional keywords.



Keyword	Intent	Pos.	Volume	CPC (GBP)	Traff...
oxfam >>	N	1	74K	7.61	17.98
oxfam online >>	N	1	33.1K	6.36	8.04
charity shop >>	C	1	74K	1.36	5.57
oxfam books >>	N T	1	14.8K	2.41	3.59
charity shops >>	C	1	40.5K	1.36	3.05

Analysis: Redcross.org.uk

In 2022, The Red Cross generated 18.67% of its organic traffic from the keyword “Ukraine”. It generates 11.5% of its organic traffic from branded keywords - far less than Oxfam.org.uk but still significant, and the vast majority of its traffic is either informational or navigational.



Keyword	Intent	Pos.	Volume	CPC (GBP)	Traffic %
ukraine >>	I	5	2.2M	1.66	18.67
red cross >>	N	1	33.1K	418.61	5.01
british red cross >>	N	1	33.1K	449.67	5.01
red cross ukraine >>	I	1	9.9K	1.00	1.50
charity shop >>	C	3	74K	1.36	1.14

Analysis: Oxfam vs Red Cross

Oxfam generates more transactional traffic

Redcross.org.uk generates 600.5K monthly visits but 55.5% comes from informational keywords.

Oxfam.org.uk receives 359K visits but 25.4% is transactional vs 14.7% for Redcross.org.uk.

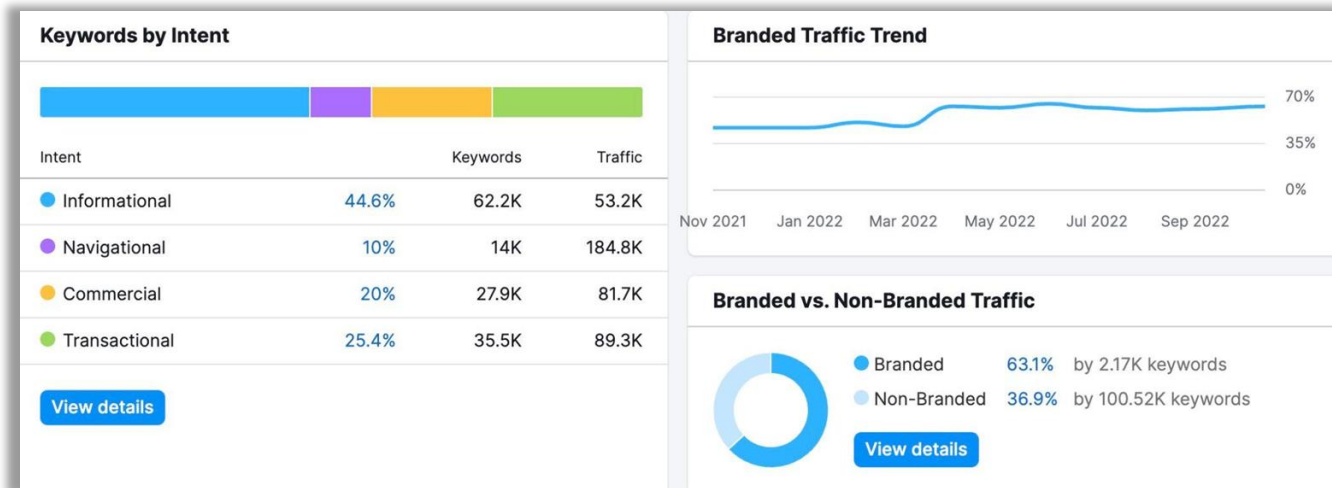
Branded traffic is important for both, but...

Oxfam.org.uk generates 30% of its organic traffic from branded keywords while Red Cross is at 11.5% and declining.

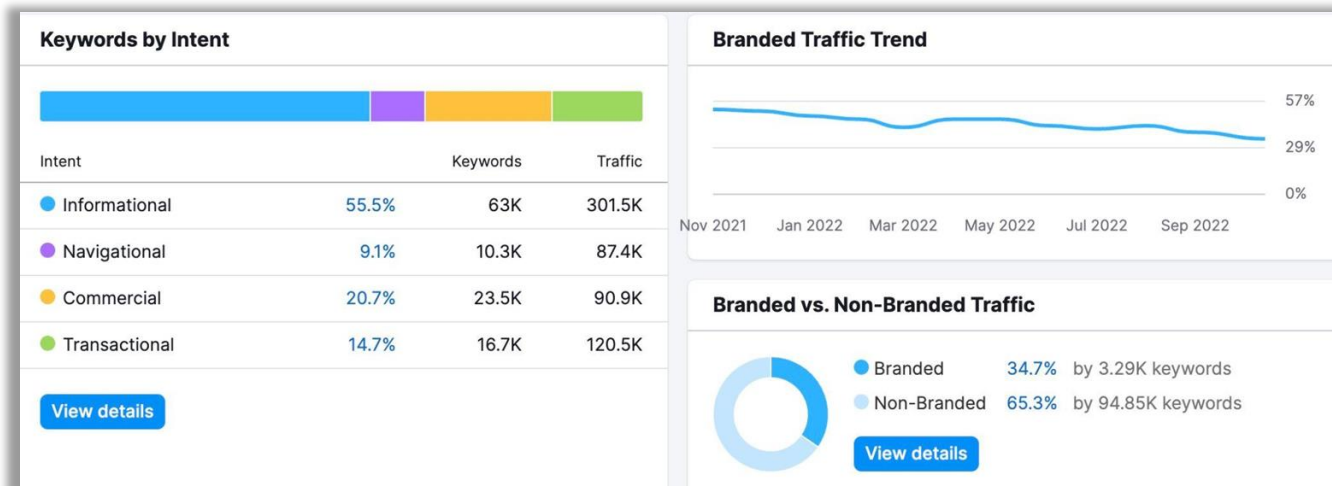
Red Cross has to work harder with its traffic

Redcross.org.uk has significantly more traffic to work with but it has to work much harder to convert visitors into donors.

Oxfam



Red Cross



What charity donors want



What inspires UK people to donate?

96%

Feel a sense of duty to give back to society and tackle inequality, using their own good fortune to help others.

71%

Point to their religious values as a key motivation for their commitment to charity.

Identify with a specific cause they feel passionate about.

75%

Personal, life-changing experiences spark giving

61%

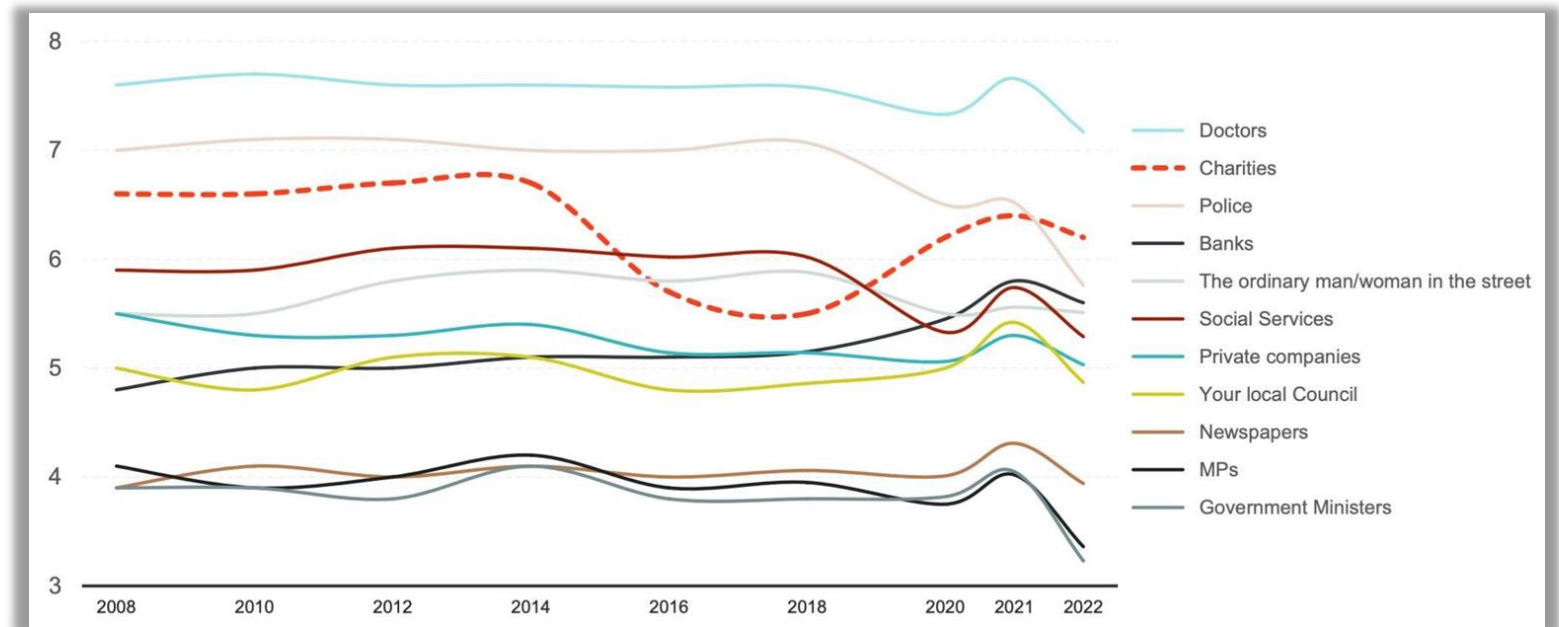
DID YOU KNOW?
The average Briton gives away £10 a month to good causes.

Public trust in charities is declining - but at a slower rate than other sectors

According to a [report published by The Charity Commission](#), public trust in charities has declined since 2008. However, trust was recovering until last year when public trust across most sectors started to decline.

In fact, charities have seen the lowest drop in trust among all sectors in the past year. Only doctors are now more trusted by the general public than charities.

The police, government ministers, MPs and local councils have seen the highest declines in trust.

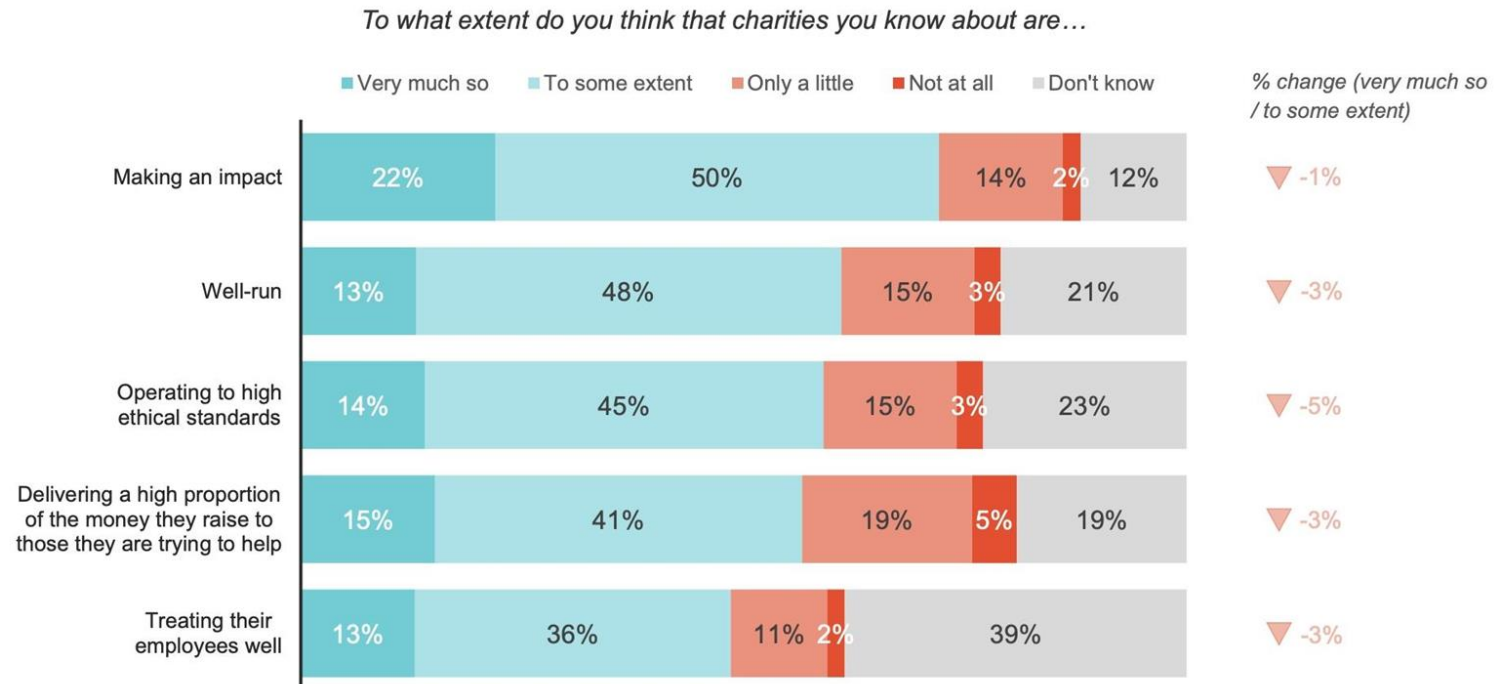


Ethnical standards are priority for donors

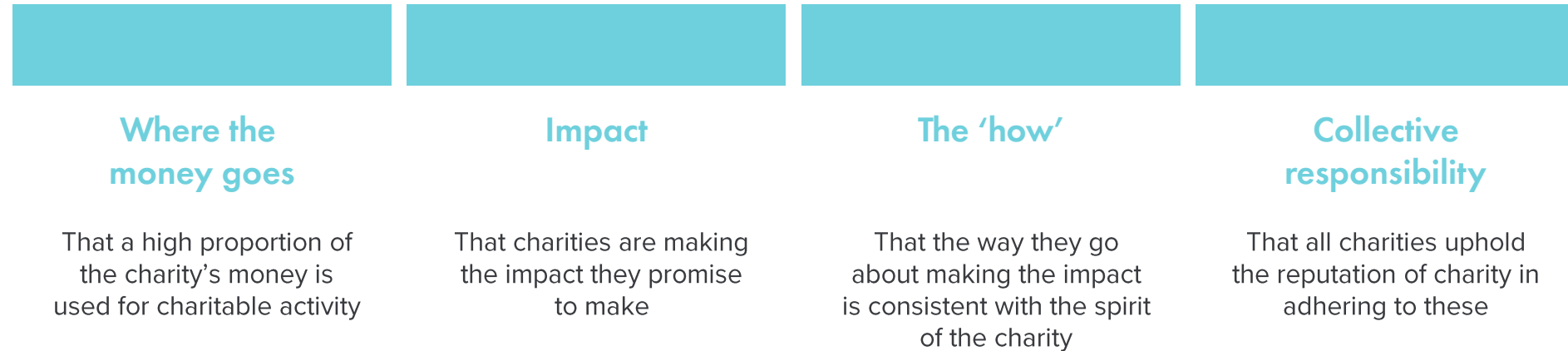
According to a [study compiled by the Charity Commission and Yonder](#), the ethical standards of charities are a priority for UK donors.

People donating to charities want to know organisations are making a real impact, run well and operating to high ethical standards.

They also want a high proportion of the money charities raise to reach those they claim to help. This is the biggest doubt among donors with 24% admitting to concerns about the charities they know.



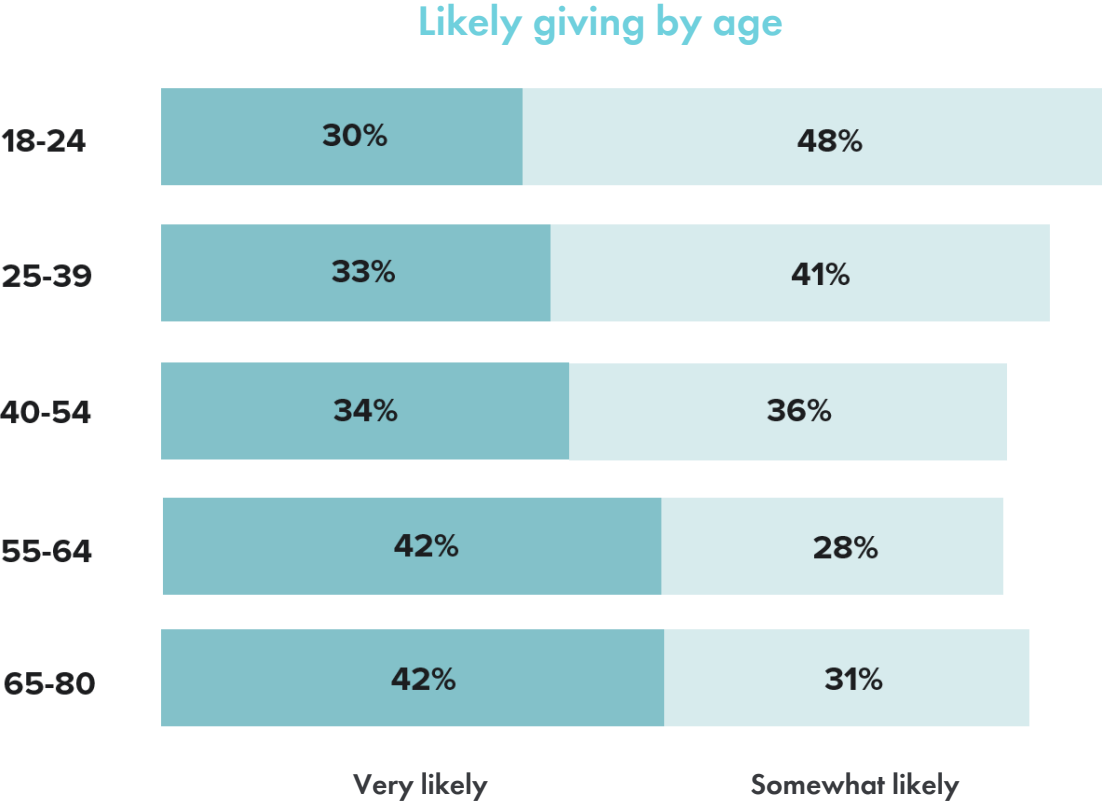
Public expectations | 4 key factors



Gen Z and Millennials most likely to donate

The [Donor Pulse: Winter Edition 2021](#) from Enthuse shows Gen Z and Millennials are the most likely age groups to donate - although, they demonstrate lower confidence than older demographics.

- 78% of Gen Z are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to donate.
- 74% of Millennials are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to donate.
- 42% of over-55s are “very likely” to donate - the highest among all age groups.



Charities need to refine their marketing messages

Gen Z and Millennials are the most likely age groups to opt into marketing messages but they're also the most concerned about data privacy.

Over-40s are less concerned about personal data and more worried about the marketing messages they'll receive. Overall Gen Z and Gen X are the least concerned about these issues but their priorities are reversed.

The most common reasons for opting out of marketing lists is being asked for more money.

Charities need to understand these priority shifts as donor demographics continue to evolve, delivering targeted messages to each audience.

Reasons for opt out

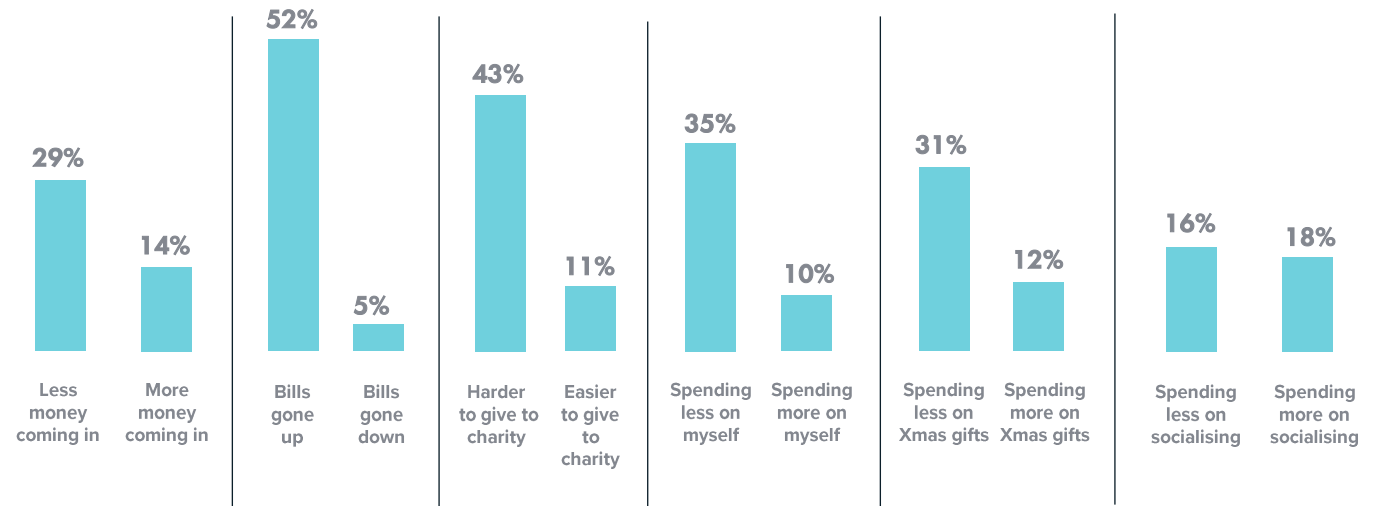


Financial concerns making it harder to donate

This winter will be even more challenging than the last for donors in the UK - and the charities that rely on them.

- 43% of donors said financial constraints were making it harder to donate in winter 2021 - before the cost-of-living crisis peaked.
- 52% said their bills had gone up in winter 2021 - before multiple increases this year.
- 35% said they were spending less on themselves in winter 2021 and 31% spending less on Christmas gifts.

Compared to last year, what does your financial situation look like?



Next steps for charities

Multi-channel marketing

Build awareness across multiple channels (online and offline), not only for your causes but also your brand.

Digital donations

Implement digital donations on your website and in physical locations to adapt to changing trends.

Demographic shift

As Gen Z and Millennials become the top donor demographics, match their evolving expectations and donation preferences.

Audience targeting

Adapt your messaging for audience groups to stay ahead of emerging trends and relevant to traditional donors - both are crucial.

Data insights

Leverage search data to inform key marketing decisions and adapt your strategy, based on insights, not assumption.

We are an evidence-led search marketing agency with lots of experience helping charities raise awareness online and increase donations.

Learn more about our [charity expertise here](#) or get in touch below if you'd like to talk to one of our charity specialists.

info@vertical-leap.uk

www.vertical-leap.uk

02392 830 281

