

The UK Generosity Survey 2023

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The Centre for Retail Research has completed an extensive study into levels of generosity and helpfulness in the UK, based on a representative survey of 1,212 adults across the UK. It is intended that the results can be used to track trends in generosity and other pro-social behaviour over time and provoke discussion and commentary across the media and the public. At a time when much public discussion is dominated by the problems of inflation, the difficulty of balancing the household budget, rising mortgage costs and the problems of crime, our report shows that many individuals are behaving generously, remaining helpful and showing a concern for others.

What is generosity?

The *Oxford Shorter English Dictionary* defines **Generous** as, 'Free in giving, liberal, munificent'.

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines **Generosity**, as 'the quality or condition of being generous. A willingness to give help or support, especially more than is usual or expected.'

Although people often think of generosity mainly in terms of charitable giving, this study views generosity as a range of pro-social behaviours, acts of kindness between people, messages of thanks, helpfulness, taking time to listen to someone, doing the shopping for a disabled person, volunteering for Citizens Advice or working with young people. This study mostly monitors simple acts of helpfulness between people rather than focusing on a millionaire's donation to extend a museum.

This 2023 *Generosity Study* is the first piece of research into generosity and helpfulness since the end of Covid-19. There is evidence that although the pandemic gave rise to many planned and unplanned acts of kindness, charitable donations fell, volunteering suffered a large reduction in numbers. Most charities have not yet regained the number of volunteers or donations they received in 2019 (CAF, 2021; ONS, 2021). The most recent ONS survey of volunteering, for example, is dated 2021.

The Centre for Retail Research

The Centre for Retail Research (CRR), now in its twenty-sixth year, is an independent research group specialising in retail and consumer research projects in Britain and Western Europe. The CRR examines customer spending trends, the changed retail marketplace, the growth of online, technology and changing payment systems. Its reports are widely quoted by the BBC, ITV, *The Economist*, *The Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*. Its Director is Professor Joshua Bamfield, an economist, a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, who holds degrees from Oxford and Nottingham Universities. The CRR was originally a research group at a British university.

CAF (2022) *UK Giving Report 2022*, London: Charities Aid Foundation.

ONS (2021) *Volunteering and Charitable Giving - Community Life Survey 2020/21*, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 29 July.

I MEASURING OVERALL TOTALS OF UK GENEROSITY

This Generosity Survey was carried out using face-to-face interviews all over the UK with 1,212 adults during 2 May-21 June 2023. The respondents were chosen as a representative cross-section of the adult population aged 18 years to 75+. They were asked whether in the previous three months they had been involved in one or more of a set of 15 generous scenarios based on a research instrument used in the U.S. (see Table 2). They were questioned about the time they spent on generous or helpful support for others and whether they had been the recipients of generous behaviour by others. The time taken up in generosity was converted into a value, using minimum wage rates. The results of all the questionnaires were then grossed up for a twelve-month period to provide a picture of UK generosity for the year 2023. Further details about the methods used in this research can be found in Section IV.

Section I of this report gives the overall totals of UK generosity. Section II considers who are more generous. Conclusions and Recommendations can be found in Section III. Section IV deals with Method. Section V is a discussion of peer-reviewed academic research into generosity carried out by psychologists, sociologists and economists.

Overall Levels of UK Generosity

This year has proved to be a gloomy time in the UK with inflation in prices of most household goods and food, high gas and electricity prices, a cost-of-living squeeze and wage increases that generally lag behind price inflation causing anxiety and concern for many. Nevertheless, there is still a large amount of generosity in the UK, as Table 1 shows.

	Total Hours (millions)	Total Value (£millions)	Involvement % (Percent of All Adults)
Generosity	688.74	£3,568.67	21.1%
Volunteering	852.72	£1,608.65	31.7%
Charity donations		£11,330.39	63.1%
Totals	1,541.46	£16,302.71	

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

These figures relate to 2023 and show the remarkable scale of generosity in the UK.

- The equivalent of more than £16bn of time and money is used to help other people by generous acts, volunteering and charity donations.
- Individuals in the UK used more than 1.5bn hours of their own time to help others.

Generous Behaviours

Table 2 gives further detail about the composition of generous acts. The schedule itself is derived from Collett & Morrissey's *The Social Psychology of Generosity* (2007). It shows a range of

scenarios (with the listings slightly abbreviated to save space) covering different helping activities that underlie the estimate of 688.7 million hours spent with a nominal value of £3,568.6 million.

Table 2: Generous Acts, Time Taken, Value and Engagement

	Total Time (mn.hours)	Monetary value (£Millions)	People (Millions)	Percentage Engagement
Kept someone company who was ill/upset	237.050	£1,284.813	11.046	20.7%
Driven/accompanied neighbour to hospital/GP	82.043	£444.673	6.025	11.3%
Given money to someone	14.508	£389.986	19.132	35.8%
Let neighbour borrow tools, ladder, dish, DIY etc	94.400	£375.760	7.085	13.3%
Helped look after grandchildren	120.438	£326.386	7.321	13.7%
Shopped for elderly/disabled person	28.747	£155.808	9.245	17.3%
Given goods/ clothes away to others	26.684	£144.629	11.543	21.6%
Let someone go in front of queue	25.588	£138.685	18.277	34.2%
Carried someone's bag, books, parcels	20.067	£108.762	12.505	23.4%
I help raise money for a charity	14.570	£78.969	17.108	32.0%
Kept door of lift open for person coming	9.935	£53.869	19.870	32.0%
I have given directions to someone needing them	6.063	£32.993	9.99	18.7%
Given lift in car to stranger	5.010	£13.577	4.008	7.5%
Helped parent take pushchair down steps.	2.234	£12.107	8.123	15.2%
Offered to help disabled/elderly person across street.	1.404	£7.613	5.235	9.8%
Totals	688.742	£3,568.631	166.518	21.1%

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

Table 2 shows these in descending rank order of time-value. The largest one was 'I kept someone company, who was ill or upset', with 237 mn hours, valued at £1,284.813. The number of people who did this was in excess of 11 million or 20.7% of the adult population.

The second largest was 'I drove (or accompanied) someone to the hospital or GP'. More than 6 million are estimated to have carried this out (11.3% of adults), taking up 82.043 mn hours, time valued at £444.673 mn.

35.8% of the adult public gave money to someone they did not know, predominantly beggars and the homeless. Many made donations regularly. The combined value of this generosity was £389.986 mn. The fourth most important was individuals or households that let a neighbour they did not know well borrow tools, equipment, cooking utensils or similar. This involved 94.4 mn hours. The time value has been estimated using 50% of the average rental cost of such equipment. The proportion of adults that had lent out such equipment was 13.3% (7.085 mn adults). The imputed cost was the saving this provided for recipients.

'Free services' provided by grandparents in looking after grandchildren involved 7.3 mn adults, providing 120.4 mn hours of time valued at £326.386 mn.

The remaining scheduled questions include shopping for neighbours who are elderly/disabled or otherwise unable to shop themselves, carrying bags/parcels for other

people, letting people go ahead when in a queue (say, in a supermarket), raising money for charity and giving a lift to strangers. The hours involved, the proportion of adults that have given their time and the value of time have all been calculated using methods consistent with the explanations given above.

A large number of UK adults have engaged in these 15 sample generous behaviours in the previous three months. Forty-three percent of adults have engaged in at least four of these helpful behaviours in the past three months. On an annual basis this took up 688.4 mn hours or £3,568.631 mn. Naturally although everyone potentially *can* be generous in their behaviour – and may want to be generous - some generous behaviours need a *demand* in order to provide a *supply*. For example, if no one asks you for directions, you cannot tell them the best way to get there. If you are not a grandparent, you cannot look after your grandchildren. If you are not fully able, you would not probably help a parent to bring their child's pushchair down some steps. And if you have no car, you cannot drive someone to hospital.

Therefore the *potential* generosity of the UK public may well exceed the 21.1% average seen in Table 2.

How Did People Feel About Kindness and Generosity?

The peer-review research (Section V) refers to positive 'psychological benefits' resulting from generous behaviour, what economists call the 'warm-glow effect'. Did our respondents, many of whom might have been raised in circumstances where referring to 'joy' and 'happiness' might be seen as excessive, reflect this too?

An average of 63.5% of respondents either 'strongly agreed' or 'somewhat agreed' that their kindness or generosity affected their well-being, joy and happiness, compared to 22.9% who said the reverse. The averages for male and female were very similar, but males were less likely to 'strongly agree' (14.4%) compared to females (22.5%), and more likely to 'somewhat agree' (49.2%) compared with females (40.9%).

Table 3: Does Your Generosity or Kindness Positively Affect Your Well-being, Joy or Happiness?

	YES	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Male	63.6%	14.4%	49.2%	15.6%	10.2%	10.6%
Female	63.4%	22.5%	40.9%	11.6%	15.3%	9.7%
Average	63.5%	18.5%	45.0%	13.6%	12.8%	10.1%
Age in years						
18-24	54.0%	13.2%	40.8%	17.2%	13.9%	14.9%
25-34	59.5%	15.9%	43.6%	13.5%	15.1%	11.9%
35-44	63.4%	18.4%	45.0%	13.1%	12.9%	10.6%
45-54	63.2%	19.2%	44.0%	13.8%	13.6%	9.4%
55-64	67.4%	20.4%	47.0%	13.6%	10.3%	8.7%
65-74	72.3%	23.3%	49.0%	12.1%	7.3%	8.3%

75+	63.6%	18.6%	45.0%	12.9%	16.9%	6.6%
Average	63.5%	18.5%	45.0%	13.6%	12.8%	10.0%

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

The younger age cohorts felt the joy and happiness effect of generosity rather less than all the older groups, but even the 18-24 years cohort found 54.0% agreeing that generosity had a positive impact. The greatest effect was felt by the older 65-74 years cohort, where 72.3% experienced this effect, though this was less true of those aged 75+. An average of 67.4% of people in the cohort aged 55-64 years agreed that kindness led to very positive feelings when doing generous things. The youngest age cohort was most likely to disagree with the joy and happiness effect (14.9% strongly disagreed), but those strongly disagreeing reduced with each age cohort so that the lowest proportion of those strongly disagreeing were amongst those aged 75+ (6.6%).

How Often Are You Generous?

Table 4 (below) shows the frequency that respondents thought they were generous. 48.1% reckoned they were generous either daily or weekly, but women were more likely to say this than men (50.3% to men's 45.8%). An average of 5.3% said they were *never* generous and only 8.0% said they were rarely generous. The fact that women may well be more generous, more frequently, than men is also borne out by the demographics research into the schedule of 15 generous behaviours (see later). It is not just their expressed opinion.

Peak daily/weekly generosity seems to occur in the 35-year plus cohorts, where it is almost, or more than 50%, except amongst those aged 75+ (where it is 45.4%). Those who declare they are 'never' generous peak amongst the youngest cohorts and amongst the very old.

Table 4: How Often Are You Generous?

	Daily and Weekly	daily	weekly	monthly	1-2 times pa	Rarely	Never
Male	45.8%	14.8%	30.9%	31.6%	9.0%	7.9%	5.7%
Female	50.3%	17.4%	33.0%	26.9%	9.8%	8.1%	4.8%
Average	48.1%	16.1%	32.0%	29.2%	9.4%	8.0%	5.3%
Age in years							
18-24	43.0%	15.36%	27.64%	28.73%	10.7%	10.56%	7.00%
25-34	44.8%	15.60%	29.15%	24.24%	13.8%	11.08%	6.10%
35-44	50.8%	16.08%	34.74%	29.94%	8.6%	6.45%	4.24%
45-54	49.8%	15.13%	34.65%	27.92%	9.4%	7.06%	5.89%
55-64	48.5%	16.08%	32.42%	35.84%	6.0%	6.00%	3.62%
65-74	53.1%	18.93%	34.20%	32.69%	5.2%	5.79%	3.15%
75+	45.4%	16.23%	29.21%	24.38%	12.4%	10.20%	7.54%
Average	48.1%	16.1%	32.0%	29.2%	9.4%	8.0%	5.3%

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

It is difficult to explain the results for the 75+ age cohort. If they are unwell or disabled they may possibly feel that they now need to be recipients of kindness rather than givers, or

perhaps that they have been generous most of their lives and now it is up to younger adults to show their better sides.

Table 5 brings together recollections of gifts, treats, and generosity from other people. Females receive more generosity from others than do males. On average, male respondents received -22.8% fewer generous gifts, support or time than the average for all respondents, but females received +21.9% above the average for all respondents. Males stated that the lowest 'gift' was emotional support, at 17.2% of males, and the highest was small treats, at 32.8%. 53.6% of all females had received small treats and 43.1% benefited from shared knowledge and expertise from others.

Table 5: Have You Received Generosity from Other People?

	Time	Material Gifts	Emotional Support	Small Treats	Knowledge / Expertise
Male	17.9%	24.0%	17.2%	32.8%	28.2%
Female	30.4%	32.8%	29.7%	53.6%	43.1%
Average	24.3%	28.5%	23.6%	43.4%	35.8%
Age in years					
18-24	14.2%	29.6%	18.5%	33.4%	24.3%
25-34	16.7%	20.8%	24.6%	31.8%	25.8%
35-44	17.5%	21.5%	21.1%	41.3%	30.9%
45-54	19.7%	25.3%	27.4%	37.7%	37.4%
55-64	27.7%	25.7%	29.6%	51.4%	42.5%
65-74	38.2%	37.1%	21.5%	59.9%	49.5%
75+	40.6%	47.8%	18.5%	51.1%	41.6%
Average	24.3%	28.5%	23.6%	43.4%	35.8%

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

The youngest demographic (19-24 years) was slightly more likely to receive material gifts than the average age group (29.6%), but a higher proportion of the elderly received generosity from other people or households with those aged 65-74 being the largest beneficiaries. People 65-74 received high percentages of time, material gifts, small treats, and knowledge/expertise compared to the averages for all adults, but comparatively low levels of emotional support (21.5% compared to the average of 23.6%). The highest proportion of recipients of generosity were aged 75+, except for emotional support (18.5% compared to an average of 23.6%). The rationale is probably that children and grandchildren in the UK do not normally give their elders emotional support, but gifts of various sorts. People aged 65-74 need a lot of expert advice to help them transition to retirement, benefit issues, planning advice, age-related illnesses and legal advice regarding wills, powers of attorney etc. Hence those aged 65-74 receive slightly more generosity than those 75+.

Generosity in The Workplace and The Neighbourhood

To discover the extent to which the environments people live in and work in are generous, respondents were asked about their own experience of acts of generosity in the workplace and in their own neighbourhood. Table 6 shows that there is, or can be, generosity in the neighbourhood and the workplace, but people are rather more used to seeing generosity in

their neighbourhood (43.7% on a weekly or daily basis) than at work (39.3% on a weekly or daily basis).

Table 6: Experience of Generosity At Work and in the Neighbourhood

	Workplace			Neighbourhood		
	Daily/Weekly	Daily	Weekly	Daily/Weekly	Daily	Weekly
Males	33.2%	8.9%	24.3%	40.9%	14.8%	26.1%
Females	45.1%	14.7%	30.4%	46.3%	21.7%	24.6%
Average	39.3%	11.9%	27.4%	43.7%	18.3%	25.3%

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

Women were more likely to experience generosity at work (45.1% on a weekly or daily basis) than males (33.2%), although the difference was less pronounced when in the neighbourhood. 46.3% of females saw or were involved in generous behaviours in their neighbourhood, compared to 40.9% of males on a weekly or daily basis. Moreover, both men and women were more likely to experience or to see generous behaviour on a daily basis in their neighbourhoods than at work, the difference being 21.7% (compared to 14.7% at work) for females and 14.8% (compared to 8.9%) for males. In neighbourhoods around one quarter of respondents (25.3%) both male and females saw generous behaviour on at least a weekly basis (24.6% for women and 26.1% for men).

What Motivates You To Be Generous?

There were five main motives given for generosity (Table 7). The most significant was *to connect to one's community*, often expressed in the phrase 'putting something back' (25.1%).

Making a positive impact on others, at 24.1%, was only slightly less important. *Personal values* – often stated as 'that's the sort of person I am' was next most important at 21.3%. A slightly smaller number of people told us that they were motivated by a desire for *well-being and feeling good* (19.1%), but this may relate to feelings that are difficult to express or claim in our established culture. A lower but still significant proportion (16.8%) stated that they were generous because of their religious beliefs. This answer was not part of the questionnaire but was independently suggested by respondents under 'Other'.

Table 7: Main Motivations of Generosity

	Personal Values	A Positive Impact On Others	Connection With My Community	Well-being & Feeling good	Religion
Males	23.0%	25.7%	21.6%	19.3%	15.9%
Females	19.7%	22.5%	28.4%	18.9%	17.6%
Average	21.3%	24.1%	25.1%	19.1%	16.8%
Age in Years					
18-24	17.0%	28.3%	17.6%	23.1%	10.4%
25-34	19.4%	26.8%	22.3%	20.3%	11.7%
35-44	19.1%	24.4%	24.7%	18.3%	13.9%

45-54	20.5%	24.5%	26.9%	17.1%	17.7%
55-64	21.2%	22.6%	28.9%	16.5%	18.8%
65-74	26.2%	23.3%	28.1%	19.7%	22.3%
75+	27.3%	18.3%	25.2%	21.1%	24.4%
Average	21.3%	24.1%	25.1%	19.1%	16.8%

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

Males were more likely to emphasise their 'personal values' (23.0%) and 'making a positive impact' (25.7%), while females expressed the view they were motivated more by 'connection to my community' (25.1%) and (slightly more than males) by 'religion' (17.6%). People do not necessarily reflect deeply about their motivations, but Table 7 shows that there are a range of internal and external motivations for being generous. Older demographics are more likely to emphasise personal values, religion and connecting with my community rather than well-being and feeling good, while younger demographics focus more on making a positive impact on others and well-being and feeling good. However, what motivates the sample of adults is a mix of motives.

What Barriers Are There To Generosity and Helpfulness?

Table 8 shows the main barriers, preventing individuals and households being more generous. The main factors are domestic pressures (37.6%) and shortages of funds (37.3%). Other important considerations include work pressures (32.8%). A fear of being rejected or failing affected 18.8% and lack of ideas/inspiration for generous acts affected 16.3% of respondents.

Table 8: Main Barriers to Generosity and Helpfulness

	Work Pressures	Domestic Pressures	Shortage of Funds	Lack of Inspiration	Fear of Rejection
Males	35.5%	33.6%	39.0%	16.4%	18.5%
Females	30.2%	41.4%	35.7%	16.2%	19.1%
Average	32.8%	37.6%	37.3%	16.3%	18.8%
Age in years					
18-24	28.7%	24.7%	62.0%	28.5%	24.7%
25-34	35.8%	38.7%	51.2%	18.6%	17.3%
35-44	39.2%	53.5%	39.0%	16.8%	15.4%
45-54	46.9%	51.4%	36.8%	14.9%	15.3%
55-64	37.8%	34.5%	31.9%	12.3%	22.3%
65-74	18.6%	26.3%	22.1%	15.8%	24.6%
75+	12.1%	22.6%	16.9%	9.1%	14.0%
Average	32.8%	37.6%	37.3%	16.3%	18.8%

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

For males the key problems were work pressures (35.5%) and shortages of funds (39.0%). For females it was domestic pressures (41.4%) and a shortage of funds (35.7%). For the younger age cohorts (18-34 years) shortages of funds were understandably the most important barrier (62.0% and 51.2% for 18-24 and 35-44 respectively). The youngest cohort was also beset by a lack of ideas and inspiration (28.5%) as well as a fear of rejection (24.7%). For people 35+ in their middle ages, financial pressures ease but

domestic pressures and pressures of work become more important, domestic pressures being more significant for females. For 65+ all the barriers fall in importance, but fear of rejection becomes significant again (24.6%) for those aged 65-74 years.

II WHO ARE MORE GENEROUS?

Are Men More Generous Than Women?

Table 4 showed that, when asked, 45.8% of males said they were generous, either daily or weekly. However, female respondents stated that as many as 50.3% were generous on a daily or weekly basis, a 9.8% difference in favour of higher female involvement in generous activities.

The schedule of 15 generous behaviours (itemised in Table 2) has been analysed for the results of generous behaviour by male and female respondents separately. The proportion of each sex that was involved in each generous behaviour was similar, with an overall average (for the 15 behaviours) of 20.9% for males and 21.3% for females, a difference of only 1.9%. However the small apparent difference may simply be a statistical fluke.

Table 9 gives three indicators of involvement in generous behaviours, by sex. Examination of the data shows that although the percentages of male and female involvement in generous behaviours are similar, the figures for hours and time value show clear differences. Women account for 54.1% of the time spent on the 15 activities and contribute £1,926.232 mn of value, compared to men's £1,641.998 mn, 17.3% more than males. But there are more women in the adult population than men (51.1% of adults are female) so some differences in engagement and time value are due to this factor. Table 9 allows for the differences in the numbers of women compared to men, by calculating the time value that would be expected by an average 51.1% of the population. It is calculated by comparing the *expected time value* against the actual time value. Hence, if each sex or gender engaged in generous behaviour to the same degree, they would each have an index of 100.0. Table 9 gives females a Value Index of 105.6 and males 94.1, 10.9% lower. As it is, there is an average difference of 12.2% in helpfulness between males and females, in favour of females.

Table 9: Generosity In Men and Women

	Total Hours (Millions)	Time Value (£mn)	Involvement (Percent of Population)	Index of Value
male totals	316.119	£1,641.998	20.9%	94.1
female totals	372.623	£1,926.432	21.3%	105.6
Overall Totals	688.742	£3,568.431	21.1%	100.0

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

Obviously these are averages and the actual results are widely dispersed between males and females. However, with some exceptions, the female respondents consistently answered questions showing that on average they tended to be more generous and engaging in helpful behaviours than males.

Generosity: How Does It Compare In Different Parts of the UK?

This section gives the results for the devolved regions of the UK and for England. The number of questionnaires completed in each region was strictly in proportion to its population, with the exception of Northern Ireland where we slightly over-sampled (questioning 39 individuals rather than the 34 that its population required). This was intended to help prevent distortions attributable to not having a sound cross-section of the population. As England is 84.3% of the adult UK population, the great majority of questionnaires were completed by people living in England. The number of questionnaires completed were: England, 1015; Scotland, 100; Wales, 58; and Northern Ireland, 39.

Table 10: Generosity In UK Regions and Devolved Administrations

	Total Hours (Millions)	Time Value (£mn)	Involvement (Percent of Population)	Index of Value
England	580.212	£3,009.207	21.1%	99.9
Scotland	56.427	£284.502	21.0%	97.1
Wales	31.878	£166.354	21.2%	101.2
NI	20.225	£105.568	21.4%	105.5
Totals	688.742	£3,568.631	21.1%	100.0

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

As might be expected, the totals for England for the number of hours, the value of this time, public involvement in generosity behaviours is, at 99.9%, almost exactly what would have been predicted by its share of the UK population. If England's figures had been higher, then with 84.3% of the adult population, this would itself have shifted the UK total higher. The results for each devolved region was fairly similar to what would have been predicted from their population sizes (Table 10).

The Value Index shows some marginal differences between the regions. The Value Index is calculated by comparing each region's actual time value of generous behaviours against what would have been expected by its number of people. The UK average is 100.0. England, for reasons already considered, has a value index of 99.9, virtually identical to the results for the UK as a whole. Scotland is slightly down, at 97.1, showing that the time value of generosity there is slightly less than would have been expected from the size of its population. The time-value of generosity in Wales was marginally greater, at 101.2, rather higher than the average, and Northern Ireland did even better, with a value index of 105.5.

Generosity By Age Group

Table 11 shows how the generosity data vary between age groups. Each respondent was asked their age and classified into the appropriate age-group. Table 11 is based up the sub-totals of how each demographic group engaged in helpful actions, as measured by the 15 helpful behaviours (Table 2).

The age cohorts were now all of the same size. In order to make accurate deductions, the Indexes have been calculated on the basis that each group was of equal size. The results were adjusted to ensure that like was being compared with like.

The numbers of hours and the time value of generosity was highest in the older age groups. The peak was amongst the 55-64 age group, with 169.967 mn hours, valued at £814.151 mn. The index of engagement (measuring what proportion of this cohort engaged in generous activity for each of the 15 scenarios), at 115.7 was also highest for this age group.

The next in line was the 65-74 age group spending 144.89 mn hours, valued at 682.147 mn. And with an engagement index, at 112.5, only slightly lower than that of the 55-64 years.

The third most-generous demographic was the 45-54 age group. The number of hours in helpful behaviour was 106.965 mn hours, valued at £602.910. The Index of Engagement was 102.9m slightly above the UK average for all adults.

These three groups were also those with a larger proportion of persons engaged in different generous behaviours, with 24.4% of the 55-64, 23.7% of those aged 65-74 and 21.7% of the 45-54 age group.

Table 11: UK Generosity In Different Age Groups

Ages (years)	Hours	Time value	Engagement	Index of Value*	Index of Engagement
18-24	39.588	£189.235	15.0%	51.1	70.9
25-34	70.248	£430.633	18.7%	71.7	88.7
35-44	74.672	£442.826	21.0%	76.1	99.5
45-54	106.965	£602.910	21.7%	104.8	102.9
55-64	169.967	£814.151	24.4%	140.3	115.7
65-74	144.890	£682.147	23.7%	153.0	112.5
75+	82.411	£406.729	16.0%	98.2	76.0
Total/Average	688.742	£3,568.63	21.1%	100.0	100.0

*adjusted for size of cohort

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

The youngest age group, aged 18-24 years, had a respectable number of hours devoted to generous acts (39.588 mn) and 15.0% of the cohort on average engaged in each helpful behaviours. These values and percentages increased with older cohorts until the 55-64 group.

Which People Are Thought to Be The Most Generous?

Respondents were asked who, or what type of people, were in their opinion likely to be the most generous. The main answers are given in the following Table. One third of people thought that rich, well-off people were the most generous (33.4%), followed by Older, Retired people (presumably with more free time) who scored 26.7%.

Middle-class people were thought by 17.8% to be the most generous. The fourth group suggested was people from the South-East of England, scoring 13.1%. In terms of donations to charities and volunteering academic papers and research indicates that these suggests are correct.

Table 12: What Sort of People Are Regarded As The Most Generous?

	Most Generous
Rich, Well off	33.4%
Older, Retired	26.7%
Middle Class	17.8%
South East	13.1%

[Source: Generosity Survey 2023]

III Conclusions and Recommendations

Research carried out in May/June 2023, found that individuals in the UK used more than 1.5 bn hours of their own time in helping others using a range of generous behaviours. Volunteering accounted for 852.72 mn hours. Generosity and helpfulness, the topic considered in depth in this report, accounted for 688.74 mn hours, equivalent to more than £3.5 bn by value. Donations to charities by individuals and companies provided a further £11.3 bn. The complete total of generosity was £16,302.71 mn.

More than 1,200 UK adults were interviewed about their helpfulness and other generous behaviour, using 15 scenarios – from keeping someone company who was ill/emotional/upset or disabled to offering to help and elderly or disabled person across the street. On average 21.1% of respondents had engaged in each form of generous behaviour.

Analysis of academic research into generosity showed a variety of reasons for being generous from pure altruism, guilt, empathy, a desire to help others and to achieve positive change. Acts of generosity often had a psychological payback in improved wellbeing. Tsvetkova & Macy (2014) view generosity as a 'Social Contagion', with generosity creating generosity in return by others. Evidence from psychological researchers showed that helpfulness and generous behaviour were associated with enhanced joy and happiness, boosting oxytocin levels to improve health and wellbeing. Almost two-thirds of our sample (63.9%) found that helpfulness positively improved their wellbeing, joy and happiness, particularly amongst older age groups.

Most respondents questioned were generous to some extent only 5.3% said they were never generous) and the proportion saying they were generous on a daily or weekly basis was 48.2%.

Generosity is not one-sided. Most had been recipients of generosity by others in the previous three months. 35.8% had been helped by someone else's knowledge or expertise, 43.4% had been given small treats, 28.5% had received material gifts, 24.3% had been given time to talk or discuss issues by others and 23.6% had received emotional support.

Generosity was rather more evident in the neighbourhood or community than in the workplace.

Several motives were given for being generous. One quarter of respondents (25.1%) stated that it was about connecting with their community, 24.1% thought it was motivated by the desire to make a positive impact on others and 19.1% thought it was caused by the desire to enjoy the wellbeing and feeling good they received in response. The key role of personal

values was put forward as motivation by 21.3% and 16.8% related it to their religious beliefs.

The main barriers to generosity were considered to be a shortage of funds (37.3%), followed by domestic pressures (37.6%) and work pressures (32.8%).

Data was also analysed to discover who the most generous people were. Women were more generous than men, accounting for 54.1% of the millions of hours devoted to generous acts. Differences between England the devolved regions were comparatively small. The Value Index (against the Time Value for each region) for England was, at 99.9%, effectively equal to the UK average. Northern Ireland was 5.5 points higher than the UK, Wales was slightly higher than the UK average and Scotland lower.

As far as age the different age groups were concerned, the peak of generous behaviour was amongst those aged 55-64 years, followed by those aged 65-74 years. The age cohort aged 18-24 years was apparently least involved in generous behaviour, but nevertheless clocked up 38.588 mn hours of generous or helpful behaviour.

Recommendations

1. **Foster a Culture of Generosity:** Retailers should actively promote and nurture a culture of generosity within their organisations. This can be achieved by encouraging and recognizing acts of kindness among employees, as well as providing opportunities for staff to make small gestures. At Krispy Kreme this is encouraged through an "Acts of Joy" button that provides the opportunity to gift products to customers. By fostering a culture of generosity, retailers can create a positive and compassionate work environment that extends to interactions with customers.
2. **Facilitate Flexible Lifestyles:** Volunteering and sharing time accounted for a significant portion of total generosity, it is important that retailers support and facilitate their employees in making time for others. This can include offering flexible working arrangements to accommodate volunteering commitments, establishing partnerships with local charities and community organizations, and providing resources and incentives for employees to engage in volunteering activities. At Krispy Kreme it is encouraged through flexible contracts that allow employees to set their own minimum hours. By empowering employees to give back, retailers can strengthen their connection with the community and enhance their corporate social responsibility efforts.
3. **Enhance Customer Joy:** Retailers should actively seek opportunities to engage customers in acts of generosity and helpfulness. This can be achieved through initiatives such as donation drives, customer reward programs that contribute to charitable causes, or partnerships with charitable organisations. Many already do this. At Krispy Kreme, "Fundraising Dozens" of 12 doughnuts can be ordered at a discount to sell for the profit of good causes. By actively involving customers in acts of generosity, retailers not only contribute to societal well-being but also foster stronger customer loyalty and positive brand perception.

4. **Promote Well-being and Happiness:** Retailers should recognise and leverage the psychological benefits associated with acts of generosity. By highlighting the positive impact that generosity can have on well-being, joy, and happiness, retailers can encourage individuals to engage in more generous behaviours. This can be done, like Krispy Kreme, through seasonal celebrations, from sporting moments to national celebrations. Such opportunities encourage customers to experience the joy of giving.
5. **Overcome Barriers to Generosity:** Retailers should proactively address the barriers that hinder individuals from being generous. Recognizing that shortage of funds, domestic pressures, and work pressures are common obstacles, retailers can find innovative ways to overcome these challenges. Krispy Kreme alternative multi-pack sizes have opened up the opportunity for those sharing with smaller groups of friends and colleagues in post-pandemic workspaces. Time is another key barrier, so seamless online sales and gifting experiences can boost opportunities for remote acts of generosity.

IV RESEARCH METHODS

A questionnaire survey was administered to a total of 1,212 adults (18+ years) in the UK during the period 2 May-21 June 2023. A representative cross-section of adults by age cohort, by sex and by region was recruited to answer the survey.

The number of questionnaires used for each sub-group or category was proportional to the UK population. Hence, the number of questionnaires completed for males was 593 and for females, 619. The proportion of male adults (aged 18 years and above) in the UK is 48.9% and females 51.1%. The number of questionnaires completed for each region or devolved administrative area was *pro rata* to its adult population: there were 1,015 questionnaires in England; Wales 58; Scotland 100; and Northern Ireland 39.

People from, or appearing to be from, ethnic minorities were interviewed, but the number were too few to be reported separately in a statistically robust manner. Respondents were also classified demographically into the following age groups:

Data was also collected by demographic cohort. These were mostly organised into ten-year bands, starting at age 18 years and ending at 75+ years. Except for the youngest and the oldest cohorts, each demographic group was equal to or a little over 16.1% of the adult UK population. An average of the time taken for each event was collected for each act of generosity and the results grossed up for the UK adult population (in millions of hours) to indicate the relative scale of each generous activity. These were then given a time-value, based on £5.52 per hour. The people carrying out generous acts would often do so in their spare time or by people who were retired, so the time-value is an indicator of the implicit costs of different forms of generosity rather than an attempt to value precisely the accurate replacement cost of the time taken to perform each generous act.

In order to determine accurately how involved each respondent was in generous behaviour they were given a set of scenarios, first proposed by Collett & Morrissey (2007), University of Notre Dame, Indiana. These scenarios are widely used by academics and professionals in

the U.S. in studying generosity and helpfulness and clarified the range of helping activities that 'generosity' can comprise. Scenarios varied from 'I have done shopping for someone disabled/elderly' to 'I let someone else go ahead of me in a queue' and 'I carried someone's bag, books, parcels'. Respondents were asked to recollect for each situation, whether they had done this in the past three months, how many times, and how long on average was taken up by helping others in each way. Remembering events over short periods is used by the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) for victimisation studies, because memories are more

Collett, J. L. and Morrissey, C. A. (2007) *The Social Psychology of Generosity: The State of Current Interdisciplinary Research*, Department of Sociology, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, October.

accurate over a shorter term and there is a smaller risk of making mistakes than if one is asked to recollect events that occurred over the previous twelve months. The results were used to calculate total hours involved in generous activities and the indirect value of these hours, which were then grossed up for all UK adults for a 12-month period.

Respondents were also asked about their feelings about these generous behaviours, how frequently they act in these ways, their motivation for any generous acts they undertook and the barriers that prevent their behaving even more generously.

V PEER-REVIEW RESEARCH INTO GENEROSITY

Research shows that acts of kindness and generosity are prized by the recipients, they provide emotional benefits to the originators of these acts, and often generate - in turn - generosity by those who have been helped (Tsvetkova and Macy, 2014). People who have received donated blood are far more likely in the UK to become blood donors than the rest of the population.

Generosity consists of many different pro-social behaviours to help others. Charitable donations are certainly generous. However this study is primarily about a range of generous and helpful behaviours rather than focusing on charitable donation alone.

Psychological and economic researchers indicate a range of motives for generosity, including altruism, guilt and happiness through seeing the effect of interventions on others (Aaker & Liu, 2008; Batson, *et al.*, 1981). Empathy, the ability to place yourself in the same position as others, is viewed as key to generous acts (Herzog and Price, 2016; Pasic *et al.*, 2016). Social norms, or expected behaviour, are also important in affecting levels of generosity and volunteering (Grube & Piliavin, 2000). Indeed Ellingsen & Johannesson (2011) refer to generosity as part of signalling behaviour.

Research into neural networks and the functioning of the brain has found that generosity provides similar pleasure responses in the brain to those associated with the anticipated pleasure of buying merchandise. Park, *et al.* (2017) find a neural link between commitment-based generosity and pleasure or happiness.

Generosity therefore can produce a psychological reward, linked to joy and happiness (Aknin *et al.*, 2012; Bryant *et al.*, 2003). This often stimulates others to be generous and to reciprocate. Tsvetkova & Macy (2014) view generosity as a 'Social Contagion' with generosity producing further generosity, joy and pleasure in others as well as the givers. From an

economic perspective, Andreoni (1990) refers to the joy of giving as having a *warm-glow* effect. Although micro-economists generally concentrate on what might be termed *selfish* or *self-oriented* behaviour rather than generosity (according to Clotfelder [1997] or Mourao [2008]), the economists of generosity are simply following in the footsteps of Adam Smith, whose first book was entitled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 1790.

Research by psychologists shows that small acts of generosity may be as important as large-scale donations. Indeed, Sandstrom *et al.*, (2019) found that expensive gifts provided by higher-status individuals to lower-status persons carried high emotional costs, however altruistic the motivation of the giver. High oxytocin levels (that regulate emotional responses, trust and empathy) are associated with generous behaviours (Wu & Su, 2015). Indeed in 2014, the *American Journal of Neuroradiology* recommended greater generous behaviour to its readers, reminding them that oxytocin levels were positively related to generosity (Castillo, 2014). Park *et al.*, (2017) and Vartanian & Goel (2004) used functional magnetic resonance (fMRI) on respondents and found that the area of the brain thinking about the joys of shopping and deciding as well as the aesthetics of fine art were both areas stimulated when respondents were asked to think about generous acts. Generosity can therefore feed back into heightened and positive satisfying emotions.

Recent research by Sommerlad *et al.*, (2023) even linked volunteering and related social involvement by older people to a reduced risk of dementia. Aderman (1972) argued that generosity has a role in the management of health. Pasic *et al.* (2016) also found that higher levels of generosity were associated with improved health outcomes.

Women are seen as being more generous than men (by an average of 4% [according to Bilen *et al.*, 2021]), although DellaVigna, *et al.* (2013) argued that females can be more careful than males about some generous behaviours. Better-off households and individuals typically made larger donations to charity and were more likely to volunteer (Pasic *et al.* 2016; Ellingsen & Johannesson, 2011; Herzog & Price, 2016), whilst lower-income individuals saw their financial situation as a barrier to wider engagement in giving money or time (Collett & Morrissey, 2007; Wilson, 2000; Meer & Priday, 2020; Muraao, 2008). The 2021 survey of UK charitable donation and volunteering (ONS, 2021) found that older people were more likely to give money to charity and to volunteer.

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