



**Celebrating  
15 Years of  
Impact**

**BigGive**

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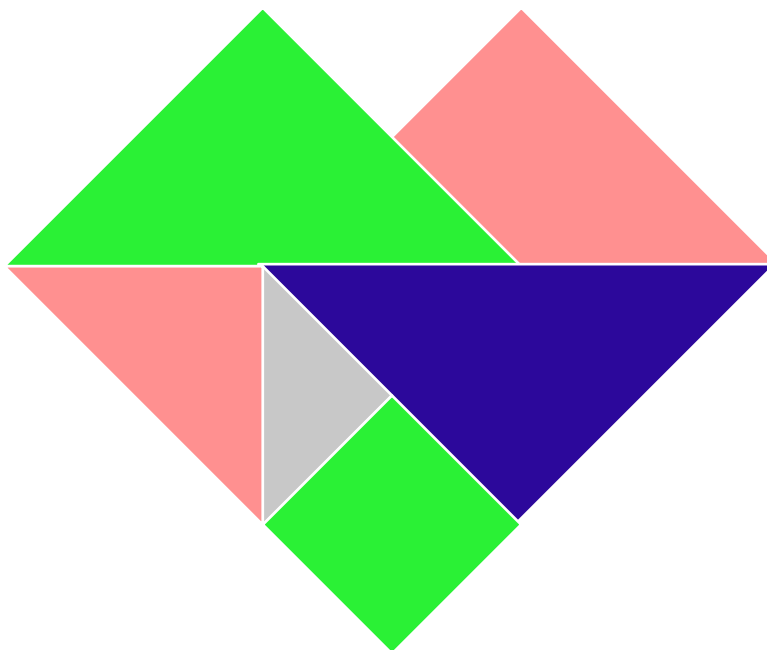
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**Big Give was established in 2007 by Sir Alec Reed, founder of Reed Executive Ltd, initially as a search engine for 'big givers' to find charities to give to and a secure way for them to give online where their funding would be matched and made tax-efficient. In 2008, Big Give ran its first Christmas Challenge, whereby The Reed Foundation provided match funding for donations raised by charities. Other philanthropists, foundations, and funders (Champions) joined in subsequent years.**

With a Christmas Challenge every year since, as well as targeted match funding campaigns to support humanitarian emergencies and other overarching charitable needs, Big Give has helped to raise millions since its inception.

To celebrate 15 years of 'multiplying generosity through match funding', Big Give wishes to take stock of the last 15 years, to better understand and promote the power of match funding and the impact that it has had on charitable giving. This exercise is not intended as a full impact evaluation but rather a broad assessment of the positive influence Big Give has had over its lifetime.

Publish date: February 2023.



# Methodology

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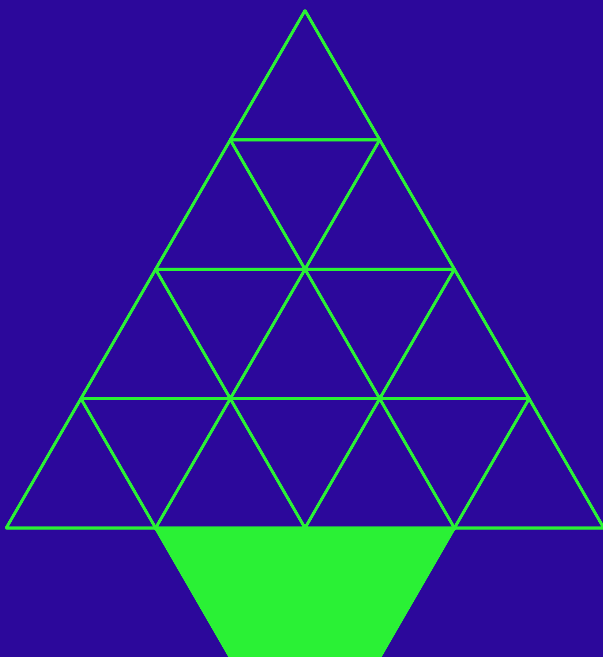
To tie in with the 15th anniversary, Big Give engaged independent consultancy *The Researchery* with consultant Deborah Fairclough, to help assess how Big Give creates a greater impact for thousands of good causes.

The consultants undertook several analyses to achieve this goal:

1. A calculation of the total monies the Big Give has helped to raise over the 15 years, and breakdowns thereof
2. An assessment of the broader 'non-monetary' impact for both charities and Champions that comes from involvement in Big Give campaigns
3. An exploration of any impact Big Give may have had on charitable giving overall, for example, as a catalyst for match funding use across the Third Sector and Government.

A mixed methodology approach was employed to address these objectives and to approach the question of 'impact' from different angles:

- a. Quantitative analysis of existing financial data held by Big Give
- b. Quantitative analysis of responses to the Charity Impact Surveys conducted by Big Give amongst charitable organisations who have participated in the Christmas Challenge campaigns between 2018 and 2021, with a total of 2,695 responses<sup>1</sup>
- c. Nine interviews with participant charities and funders (Champions) to capture views on the impact of Big Give (six with Charities and three with Champions), plus additional discussions with Sir Alec Reed, founder of Big Give, and with Cath Dovey, Co-founder of The Beacon Collaborative and Chair of Rosa, The UK Fund for Women and Girls, to capture the broader charity sector perspective.



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<sup>1</sup> Some charities participated in more than one Christmas Challenge and associated Charity Impact Survey during this period

# How Big Give works...

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**Big Give's mission is simple: to multiply the impact of generous giving. It has pioneered the concept of match funding – asking funders to match donations to charities made by members of the public.**

So £50 from an individual becomes £100 for a good cause after being doubled by a Big Give match funding 'Champion' – typically philanthropists, foundations or companies.

Match funding is a proven method to encourage more people to give and people to give more: **One donation, twice the impact!**<sup>2</sup>

Big Give helps charities to raise vital funds, to develop their skills and to build their profile. This can be done by joining an existing match funding campaign, such as The Christmas Challenge or the Green Match Fund, or by running bespoke campaigns via Big Give's online platform.

Big Give's match funding partners or 'Champions' include some of the biggest names in philanthropy and funding, including trusts and foundations, corporations, high net worth individuals and statutory bodies, to provide match funding to charities and causes which meet their philanthropic goals.



**What's different about the Big Give is it's not just match funding; it's match-match funding. We introduce these donors, and it gives it another layer ... [For example] let's say, X Charity, their ... big donors put up £20,000 between them. Then we, The Reed Foundation, match that £20,000. So you've got £40,000 to take to the 'ordinary donors' of X Charity to double. That's £80,000. And then you get tax back on it [Gift Aid] of about £20,000.**



Sir Alec Reed,  
Founder of Big Give

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<sup>2</sup> <https://donate.thebiggive.org.uk/christmas-challenge-2022>

# The Christmas Challenge

Big Give operates the UK's biggest match funding campaign, the Christmas Challenge, which runs for seven days each year in the run-up to Christmas.

The match funds come from two sources – charities themselves secure pledges from their key donors over the summer. These pledges are then boosted by funds from a Big Give Champion who contributes to the match fund pot. The collective pot is used to double donations from online supporters when the campaign is live.

## Partners of Big Give

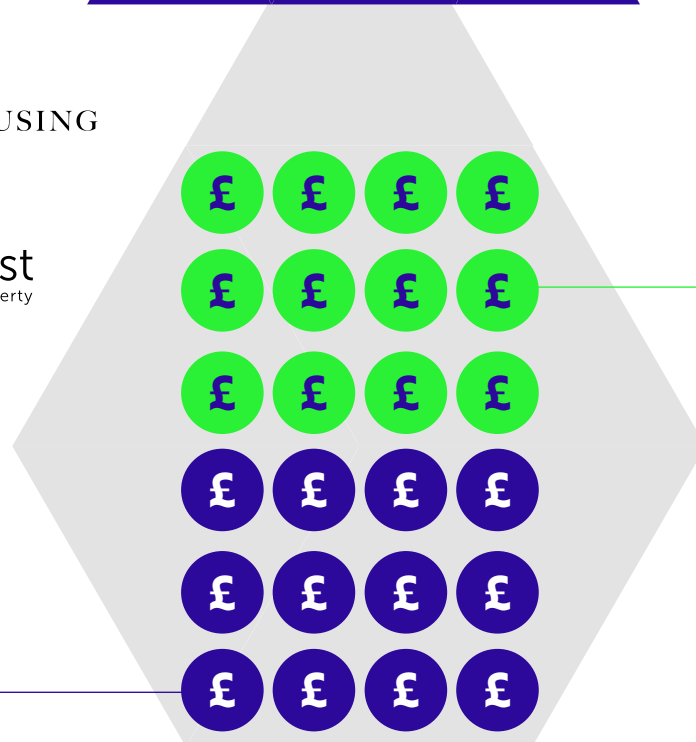
For example

THE  
JULIA AND HANS RAUSING  
TRUST

 The  
ChildhoodTrust  
Alleviating the impact of child poverty

Reed Foundation

Champions



## Key supporters

For example

- Major donors
- Trustees
- Local businesses



Pledgers

# Executive Summary

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At the time of compiling this report (December 2022), the key headlines of how Big Give is felt to positively impact charitable giving, through match funding, and other initiatives are:

## Financial Impact

- Over its 15 years of operation, Big Give has been instrumental in helping to raise just under £234 million for charitable causes, including donations, match funding and gift aid.
- Just over two-fifths (£97.4 million) has come from match funds.
- To date, 5,563 individual charitable organisations have benefited from raising money via the Big Give platform – with many participating in multiple campaigns and/or Christmas Challenges.
- Over Big Give's lifetime, 639,456 donations have been made by the public via the online platform, with an average gift of £179.
- The annual flagship event – the Christmas Challenge – running since 2008, accounts for £173.8 million of all monies raised.
- The Christmas Challenge has grown significantly over time. In 2010, it raised £8.6 million for just under 300 charities from around 15,000 donors. In 2022, £28.6 million was raised, with around 1,000 charities and 79,000 donors participating.
- Where charity income information is available, data suggests that almost half of the money raised by the Christmas Challenge 2010–2022 was for small charities with a current annual income of less than £1 million.
- Charities participating in the Christmas Challenge are most likely to identify their campaign focus as Health & Wellbeing, closely followed by Education, Training & Employment, and then Community Support & Development.

## Impact on Charities: Resilience

Participating in Big Give's Christmas Challenge has improved the resilience of charities, i.e. helping to generate more and bigger donations. Of those charities participating in the Christmas Challenge since between 2018 and 2021 and responding to the Charity Impact Survey which followed each campaign...

- Three-quarters (76%) feel that the Christmas Challenge's match-funding results in MORE donations being made compared to a non-match funded campaign (a quarter believe significantly more).
- Two-thirds (65%) of charitable organisations responding feel that the Christmas Challenge's match-funding results in BIGGER donations being made compared to a non-match-funded campaign.
- Over half (56%) of those charities responding believe that their existing supporters give more through the Big Give Christmas Challenge than they would normally donate – this has increased significantly from 52% in 2019 to 59% in 2021.

### Impact on Charities: Profile

Participating in Big Give's Christmas Challenge has improved charities' profile, i.e. attracting new support/developing relationships and raising the profile of the charities. Of those charities participating in the Christmas Challenge between 2018 and 2021 and responding to the Charity Impact Survey, which followed each campaign...

- 94% of the charities responding received online donations from new donors who had not previously donated to their charity. These donations equated to, on average, over a quarter (28%) of the monetary value of all donations made.
- Three-quarters (74%) of the charities participating believe that Big Give's Christmas Challenge has helped to raise their organisation's profile.
- Around 9 in 10 of the charitable organisations responding believe that Big Give's Christmas Challenge helps to develop their relationships with both existing donors, 92% and new donors, 89%.

### Impact on Charities: Skills

Participating in Big Give's Christmas Challenge has improved the skills of charities, i.e. building capacity within organisations, particularly in fundraising capability. Of those charities participating in the Christmas Challenge between 2018 and 2021 and responding to the Charity Impact Survey, which followed each campaign...

- Almost 9 in 10 (88%) of charitable organisations responding feel that participation in Big Give's Christmas Challenge has increased their organisation's confidence in digital fundraising.
- Similarly, the proportion who feel that the Christmas Challenge has positively impacted their Digital Marketing has risen significantly from 61% in 2018 to 81% in 2021.
- Over 9 in 10 (94%) feel that the Christmas Challenge has impacted their fundraising amongst individuals positively, whilst over 8 in 10 see positive impacts to their Campaign Planning (86%) and/or Social Media (81%).

### Impact on Champions

- All three of the Champions spoken to as part of this review identified match-funding as the key reason for getting involved. This was certainly in terms of seeing their donations amplified by "doubling their impact", but also that the match funding model engages and motivates charities in their own fundraising efforts, which can lead to developing new skills and working practices.
- Champions also appreciate Big Give's curation of charities presented for funding and that the associated due diligence has been undertaken.

### Impact on the Wider Sector

- Some comment on Big Give as being instrumental in leading the way on match funding, as well as accelerating the move to online fundraising.
- The investment Big Give has made in developing its online giving platform is lauded, as is its advocacy and thought leadership on match funding, both of which are felt to have benefitted the Third Sector as a whole.
- Also acknowledged is the establishment of a unique pool of donors and Champions, who might not be as readily accessible otherwise.



**Just the success of it, really, that's been the impact. It's more successful than I ever thought it would be, and it's growing every year. It's going to grow this year. And even I give more money because of it!**

**I'm very proud of it.**



Sir Alec Reed,  
Founder of Big Give



# Detailed Results

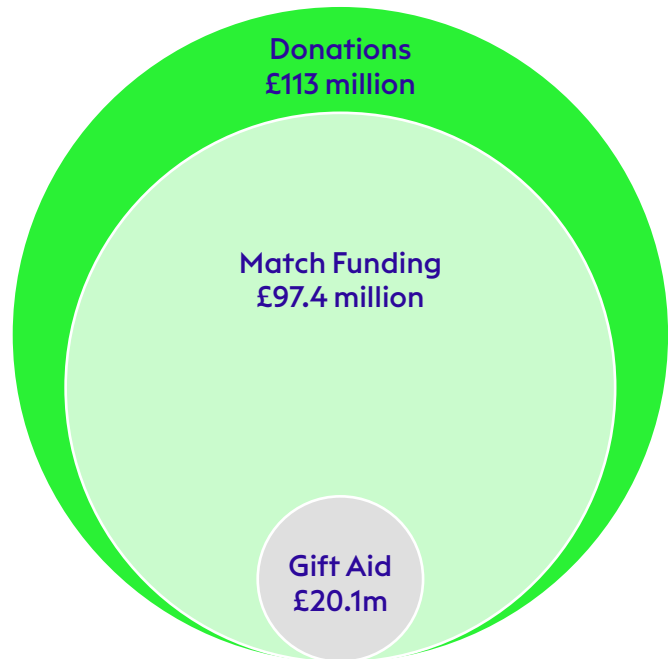
This section of the report outlines the impact of Big Give in greater detail, providing supporting evidence from Big Give's financial information, the Christmas Challenge Charity Impact Surveys conducted with charitable organisations participating between 2018 and 2021, and insights from the in-depth interviews undertaken in November 2022 as part of this review.

## 1.0 Financial Impact

Over its 15 years of operation, Big Give has been instrumental in helping to raise just under £234 million for charitable causes, including donations, match funding and gift aid.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst the majority of this (£173.8 million) has been generated through the annual flagship event of the Christmas Challenge, a not insubstantial amount has been raised through other regular initiatives such as the Green Match Fund and the Women & Girls Fund, the match funding partnership with Disasters Emergency Committee, as well as bespoke campaigns run for individual charitable organisations via the platform.

Reviewing the £230.5 million for which data is available<sup>4</sup>, the impact of match funding is clearly visible, accounting for over two-fifths of the total raised.



<sup>3</sup> Includes monies raised up to and including December 2022

<sup>4</sup> Full breakdowns are not available for c.£3.4million, largely because these donations/gift-aid payments were made offline, rather than via Big Give's online platform



It feels like a really compelling ask ... the match funding campaign can be really motivating for our donors, and I think it makes them even more inclined to give. "One donation, twice the impact", it's just such a succinct way of packaging that up to people.

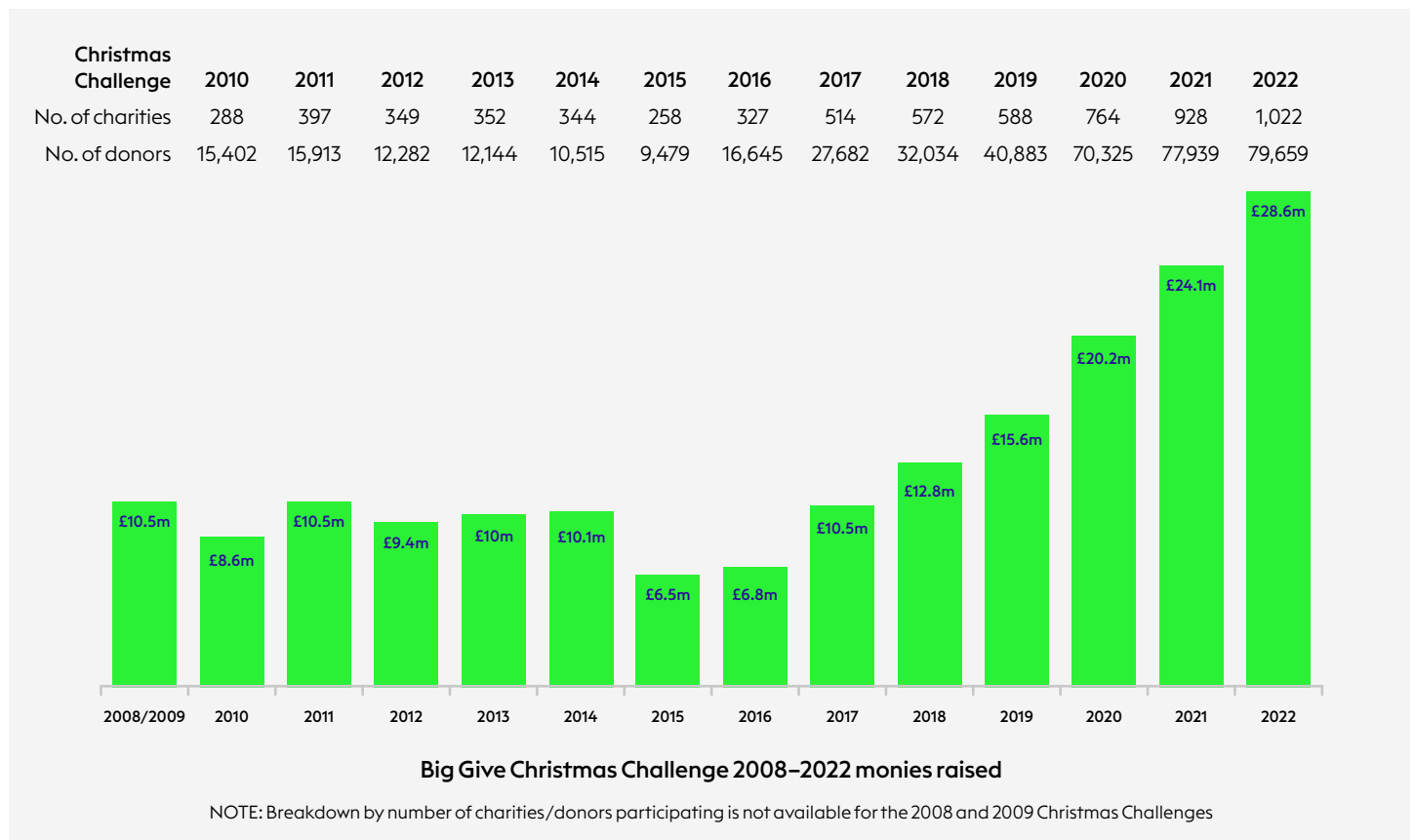


Lisa Thomas, Philanthropy Manager,  
The Prince's Trust

Over its lifetime, the Christmas Challenge has grown significantly, from raising £10.5 million across the 2008–9 campaigns to £28.6 million in 2022 alone. In 2010, around 300 individual charities and 15,000 donors participated; in 2022, participant numbers increased to over 1,000 charities and over 79,000 donors.<sup>5</sup>

Fig1. Money raised<sup>6</sup>, charity/donor participation – Christmas Challenge – Growth Over Time

## Big Give Christmas Challenge Growth Over Time



<sup>5</sup> The number of charity donors represents those giving through Big Give's online platform, any donors providing gifts offline are not included

<sup>6</sup> Includes all of donations, match funding and gift aid



Big Give has played an essential role in enabling us to fulfil our mission to provide exceptional music education to talented young musicians from all backgrounds. Their annual match funding campaign has provided an opportunity for people to support our work at all levels and each donation, no matter how much, makes a significant difference. Over the last 12 years, we have raised over £1M towards our Scholarships Fund, which enables our talented students to relish the opportunities available to them and to fulfil their potential without the burden of financial concerns. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend the work of Big Give to other charities.

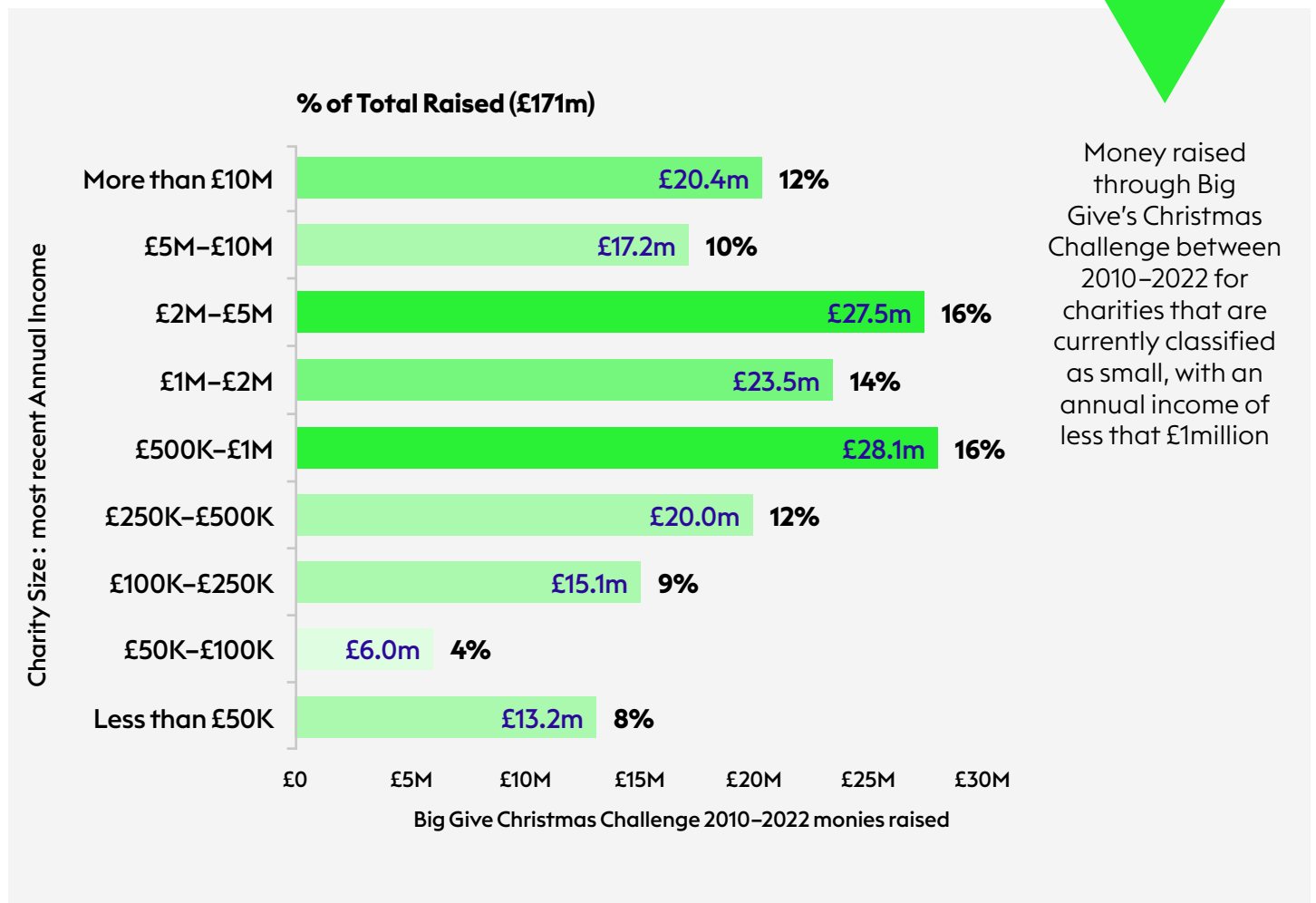


Professor Colin Lawson CBE FRCM,  
Director of the Royal College of Music

## 1.1 Financial Impact by Charity Size

Analysis of the monies generated through the Christmas Challenge 2010–2022 (and where charity income information is available) shows a strong proportion, almost half, being raised by smaller charities.

Fig 2. Total money raised Christmas Challenge 2010–2022 by Charity Size (Income)<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Included all of donations, match funding and gift aid. Monies raised across Big Give Christmas Challenge Campaigns since 2010 have been allocated to income bands using the most recent Annual Income provided by the charitable organisations participating. It is important to note that individual charity income is likely to have changed across the life of Big Give. c.£3 million is attributed to charitable organisations without income information and so this amount cannot be allocated to the bands shown. Data is not available for Christmas Challenge 2008 and 2009 campaigns.

The inclusive nature of the campaign is noted by a number of participants in the qualitative interviews; both charities and Champions note that the platform creates more of a level-playing field for all participant charities, allowing smaller charities to be located and supported just as easily as larger more well-known organisations.



**It's a campaign that is fair to small and large charities. It treats everybody equally; it doesn't matter how much you're trying to raise through it. It's a vehicle for all. All charitable needs, all charity sizes.**

Lisa Thomas, Philanthropy Manager,  
The Prince's Trust

**You certainly wouldn't find some of the smaller ones [without Big Give]. We quite like to support the smaller projects ... or less heard of charities ... and some of the more interesting projects.**

Christine Blackford, Director,  
Newhall Publishing

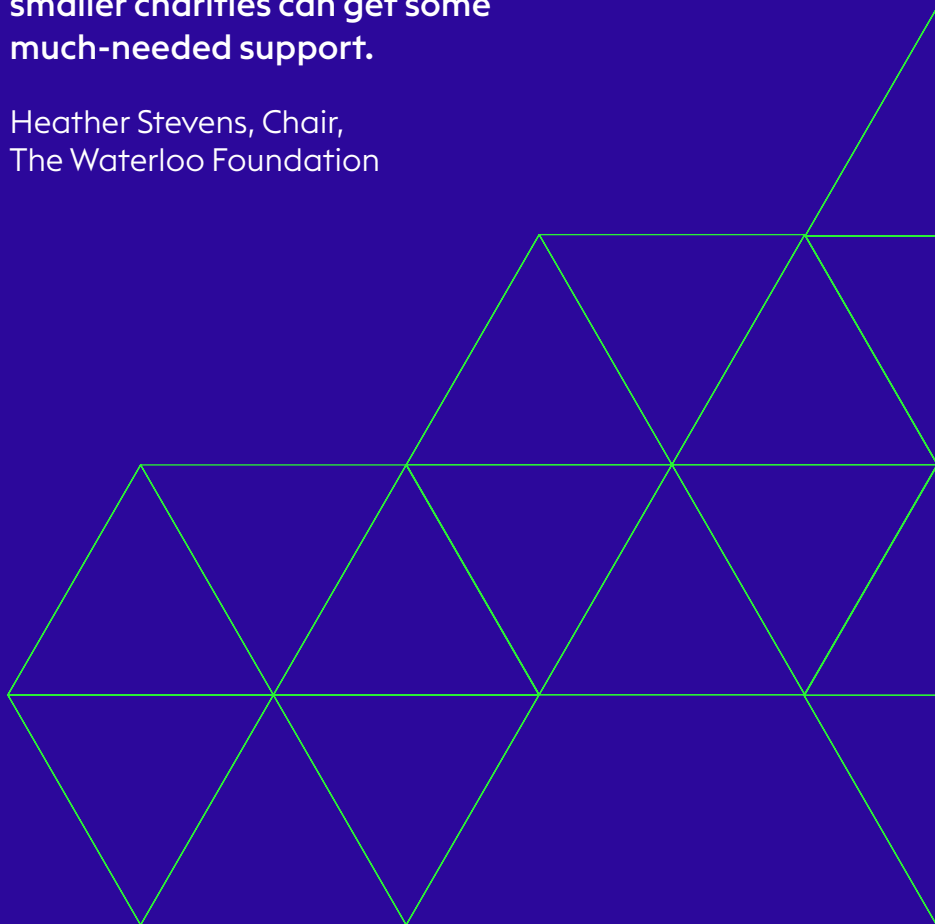
**The Big Give has given Classics for All a platform to increase awareness of our work and attract new donors. As a small charity, it has given us the opportunity to run a campaign which accounts for a high percentage of our individual giving income.**

Jane Page, Head of Fundraising,  
Classics for All



**When we heard how the Big Give could double up the public donations made to our favourite charities, it was a no-brainer for the Foundation to work with them. They have helped raise these extra funds for many of our charity partners, ranging across the environment, education in the developing world, water projects and here at home in Wales. It has been very rewarding to see our money unlocking giving in others, such that these really worthwhile smaller charities can get some much-needed support.**

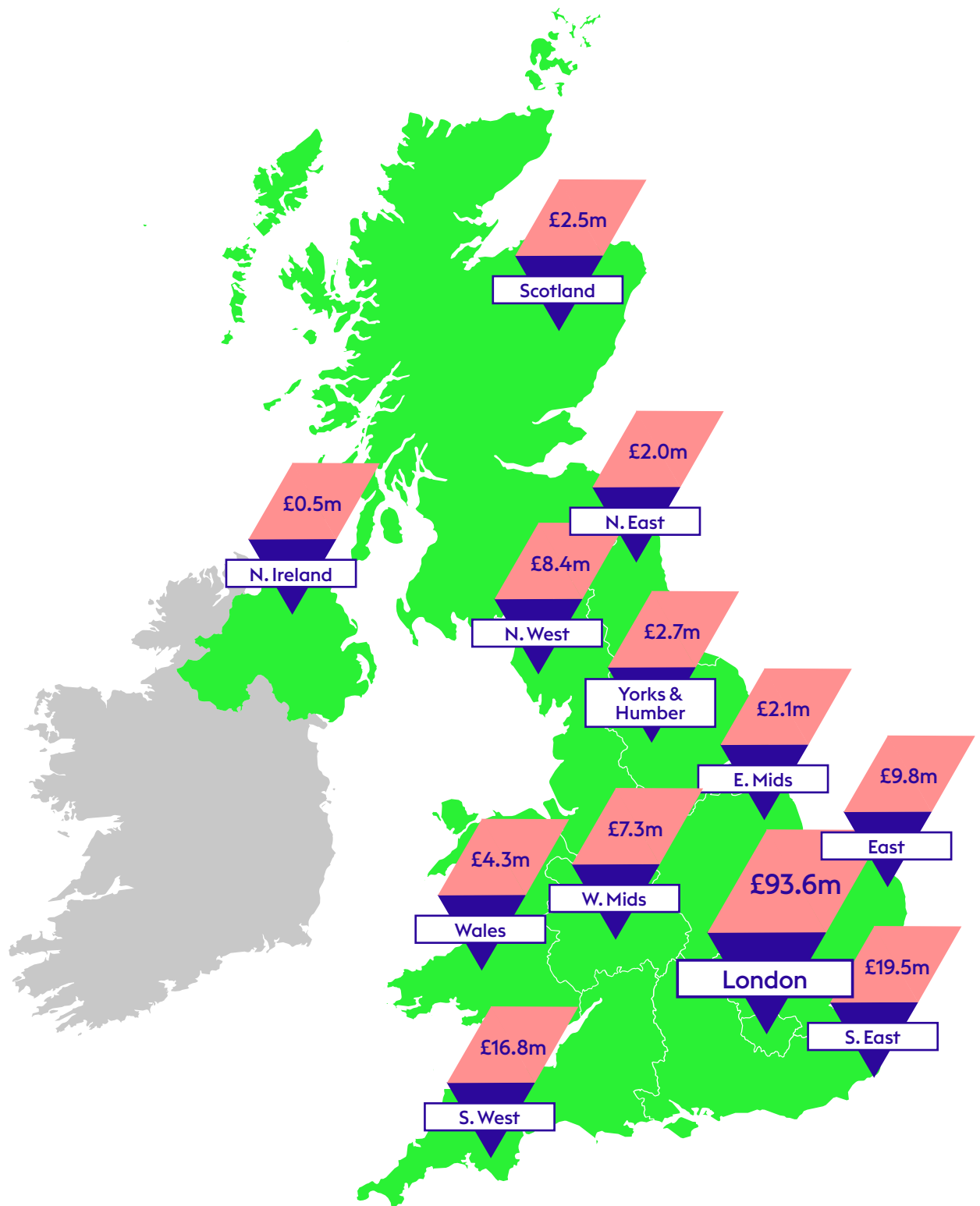
Heather Stevens, Chair,  
The Waterloo Foundation



## 1.2 Financial Impact by Region

While the regional analysis of monies raised through the Christmas Challenge shows a large skew towards London, this is likely to be due, at least partly, to the charity's Head Office or Registered Address, many of which will be based in London regardless of the actual geographical coverage of the charity's operations, be that local, regional, national or international.

Fig 3. Total money raised Christmas Challenge 2010–2022 by UK Standard Region<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> Includes all of donations, match funding and gift aid. Monies raised across Big Give Christmas Challenge Campaigns since 2010 have been allocated to UK Region using the postcode information provided by the charitable organisations participating. This is likely to reflect the charity's Head Office or registered address, and may not fully represent their area of operation. £4.3million is attributed to charitable organisations without postcode information, and so this amount cannot be allocated regionally. Data is not available for Christmas Challenge 2008 and 2009 campaigns.

## 1.3 Impact by Charitable Focus

Charities participating in Big Give's Christmas Challenge are asked to state the focus of their charity's campaign – selecting up to a maximum of three codes that best describe it. Due to the use of multiple codes, it is not possible to accurately assign monies raised to a charitable focus. Instead, Fig.4 overleaf shows charitable focus by the frequency with which each code is selected across all years of the Christmas Challenge 2010–2022.

Health & Wellbeing and Education, Training & Employment are the most commonly selected codes, with around two-fifths of all charities saying that their campaign focus falls within each of these spheres.

Charities Aid Foundation's UK Giving 2022 study<sup>9</sup> reports that the top cause for donations by the general British public is animal welfare, with 28% of donors giving to that cause within the four weeks prior to interview. For the Christmas Challenge, the charitable focus of 'animals' is only mentioned by 4% of charities responding.

This differential may be due to a number of factors: the greater prevalence of smaller charities using the platform, the timing of the Christmas Challenge (as opposed to a continuous, year-round campaign), that some charities are repeat participants in the Christmas Challenge, and so their presence is amplified and/or the overlapping nature of the codes (i.e. environment may have been selected by some 'animal' charities). There are also differences between Big Give donors and the general public, with Big Give donors tending to be older and, most likely, wealthier.<sup>10</sup> It is also likely to reflect the funding goals of Big Give's Champions and the charitable organisations and causes that they are focused on supporting.

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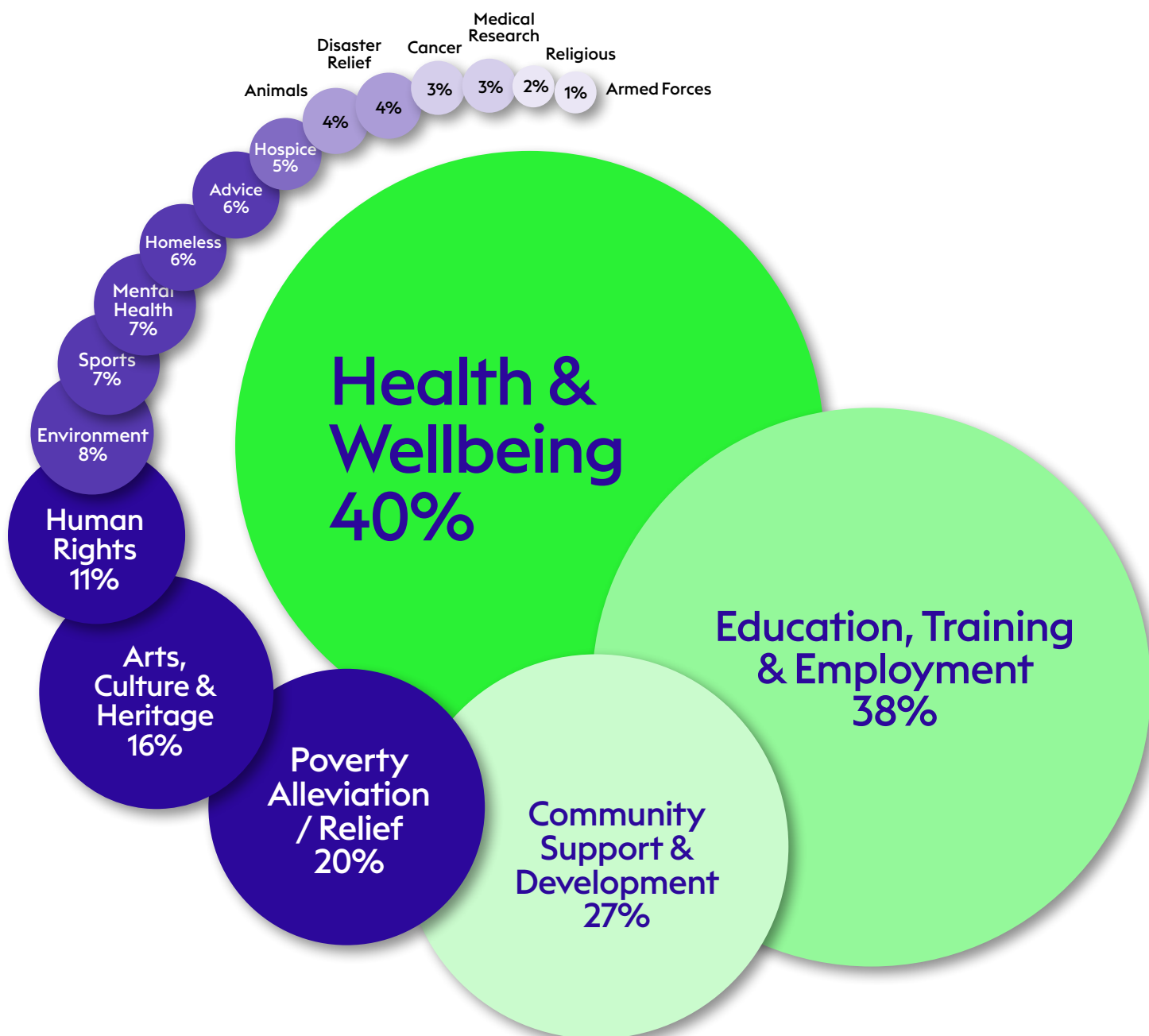
<sup>9</sup> Charities Aid Foundation, UK Giving Report 2022 – <https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/publications/2022-publications/uk-giving-report>

<sup>10</sup> "A Great Match – How match-funding incentivises charitable giving in the UK and unites funders and donors in tackling social issues", 2016, Dr. Catherine Walker, The Researchery, commissioned by Big Give, Charities Trust and RBS. <https://thebiggive.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#00000000YzQm/a/690000011G2r/WKEY33jv9xecrprZBADg5f.51SsxdPoYPDfxQljBAAQ>

Charities participating in Big Give's Christmas Challenge are asked to state the focus of their charity's campaign. Charities can select up to three categories which best describe charitable focus.

This diagram shows the proportion of each category mentioned aggregated over all Christmas Challenges between 2010–2022.

Fig 4. Christmas Challenge 2010–2022 by Charitable Focus<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup> Charities participating in Big Give's Christmas Challenge are asked to state the focus of their charity's campaign. Charities can select up to three categories which best describe their charitable focus. This chart shows the proportion of each category mentioned aggregated over all Christmas Challenges between 2010–2022 – individual charitable organisations may appear more than once if they participated in the Christmas Challenge in multiple years. Results over-add to 100% due to the ability to select multiple codes.



# Impact on Charities: Resilience

## 2.1 Match funding

Whilst the financial data allows us to isolate the match funds in absolute monetary terms, the matching offer is likely to extend beyond this by also influencing gifting by individual donors.

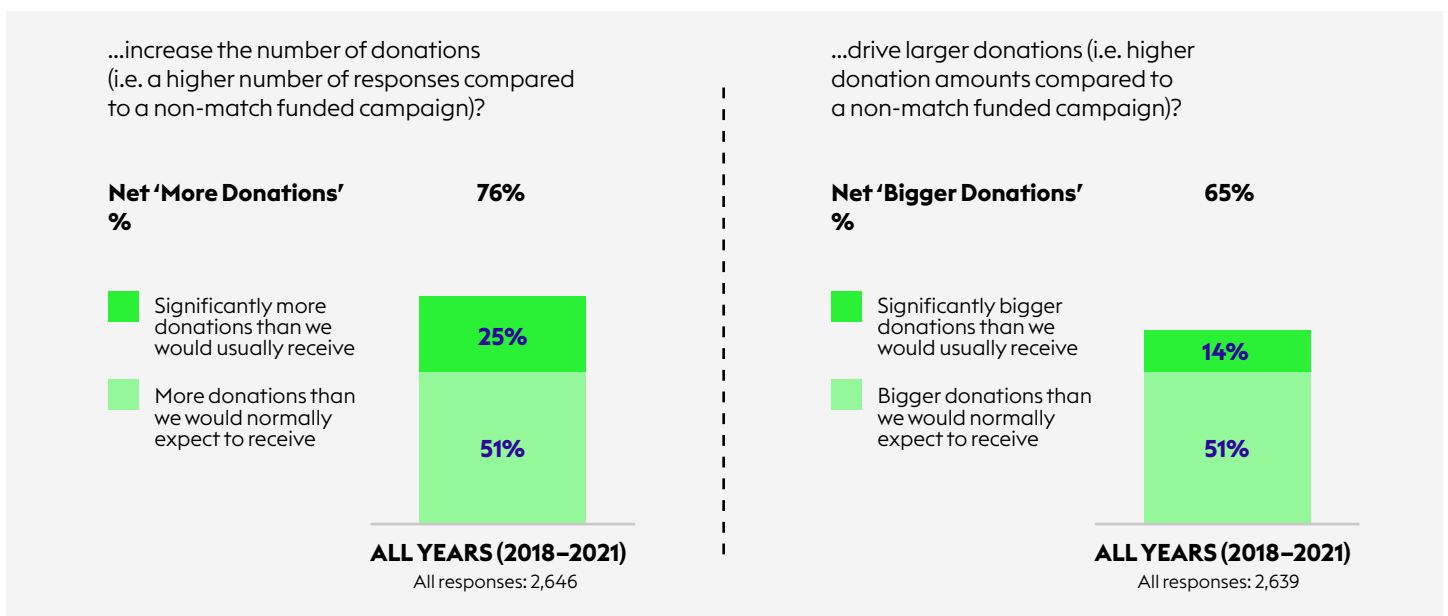
In 2016, the report "A Great Match"<sup>12</sup> identified that 8 in 10 Big Give donors felt they were more likely to give to a charity appeal because of the matching offered. Data analysis of Big Give's donor database at that time showed that the average matched gift made was around 2.5 times more than the average unmatched gift. When surveyed, over one in three (35.7%) attributed giving a larger gift to the match funding being applied to their donation.

Since the 2018 Christmas Challenge, participating charities have been sent a survey asking about their experience and the impact that they believe the campaign has had. Results in Fig.5 show that over three-quarters (76%) of those charitable organisations responding believe that the match funding generated more donations than would normally be received through a non-match-funded campaign. Two-thirds (65%) believe that the average amount donated was bigger than those normally received through a non-match-funded campaign.

Fig 5. Christmas Challenge 2018–2021 Charity Impact Surveys: Impact on Donations<sup>13</sup>

## Christmas Challenge: Impact on Donations

Compared to other fundraising you've done, how much did the match funding...



<sup>12</sup> "A Great Match – How match-funding incentivises charitable giving in the UK and unites funders and donors in tackling social issues", 2016, Dr. Catherine Walker, The Researchery, commissioned by Big Give, Charities Trust and RBS. <https://thebiggive.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#00000000YzQm/a/690000011G2r/WKEY33jv9xecrprZBADg5f.51SsxdPoYPdfxQljBAAQ>

<sup>13</sup> Results are aggregated and averaged across all Big Give Christmas Challenge Impact Surveys conducted 2018–2021, and so an individual charitable organisation may appear more than once if they participated in Big Give/responded to the Impact Survey in multiple years



In the depth interviews, charities are clear that the match funding is central to the success of their Big Give campaigns – all cite it as their main reason for participating in the Christmas Challenge.

**We are about to launch our fifth Big Give Christmas Challenge at The Children's Trust. It has become a key part of our fundraising calendar. We have found the match funding is a great way to re-engage lapsed major donors or to incentivise new donors to support. Thank you so much!**



Liz Johnson, Philanthropy Manager,  
The Children's Trust

## 2.2 Champion Match funding

In addition to obtaining pledges from their own supporters to contribute to the match fund, participating charities can receive match funds from a Big Give Champion. This money is particularly appreciated by charities, as it generally represents new income that would not be accessible otherwise.



**The good thing about the Big Give is the Champion funding, which is income that we wouldn't have received ordinarily.**

Anonymous charity user of Big Give platform

**The other big attraction for me, of course, is the Champion funding because there you really are sourcing funds that you wouldn't normally get.**

Philip Holmes, Founder, Pipal Tree



As with the participating charities, Champions supporting Big Give cite the importance of the Big Give match funding model in their decision to take part. Whilst the ability to “double the impact” is also key for funders, the way in which the model engages and motivates the charities is highlighted by all Champions interviewed as being fundamental to their support.



**[Big Give] as a match fundraising platform was attractive because on the one hand ... as the philanthropist as the funder, you saw your money go further ... But from the point of view of the grantees, it was attractive too, from a funders' point of view, because you actually saw the grantees engaging in the fundraising alongside us – so they have to make an effort. And it helped them ... to expand their community of supporters because they have to essentially raise the money from their supporters in order to take advantage of the match. It's a win for both the funder and the grantee, that is a good relationship, and the Big Give platform enables everybody to achieve that. And, of course, at the end of the day, that's good for the beneficiaries, the people the charities are working for.**

Grant Gordon, Chair, The Childhood Trust

**The key thing was that we will be supporting charities who are being proactive in raising funds and for specific projects, identifiable projects. And what I really liked was that to be successful with the Big Give, the charity has to work as well. And those that do work are very successful, and those that don't work aren't successful. And I think that's quite important ... it's not just us being generous with donations; they're contributing to their own success as well.**

Christine Blackford, Director, Newhall Publishing

**I like the grassroots up approach of Big Give ... Some of the feedback that we've had from the charities that we have supported with Big Give is that it galvanises them ... the potential is there, but they've got to do some work themselves.**

Helen Perry, Chair, The Lakehouse Charitable Foundation



This symbiotic relationship is echoed by Cath Dovey, Co-founder of The Beacon Collaborative and Chair of Rosa, The UK Fund for Women and Girls.

“[Big Give has] educated those organisations on how to work with philanthropic donors – that's another layer to its impact. I think it probably has also educated those organisations on a new kind of campaigning which aims at a different type of donor.”

So, perhaps the match funding model itself has contributed to the growth and success of Big Give (and thereby the participant charities) through its potential to drive more and bigger donations.

## 2.3 Optimising existing support

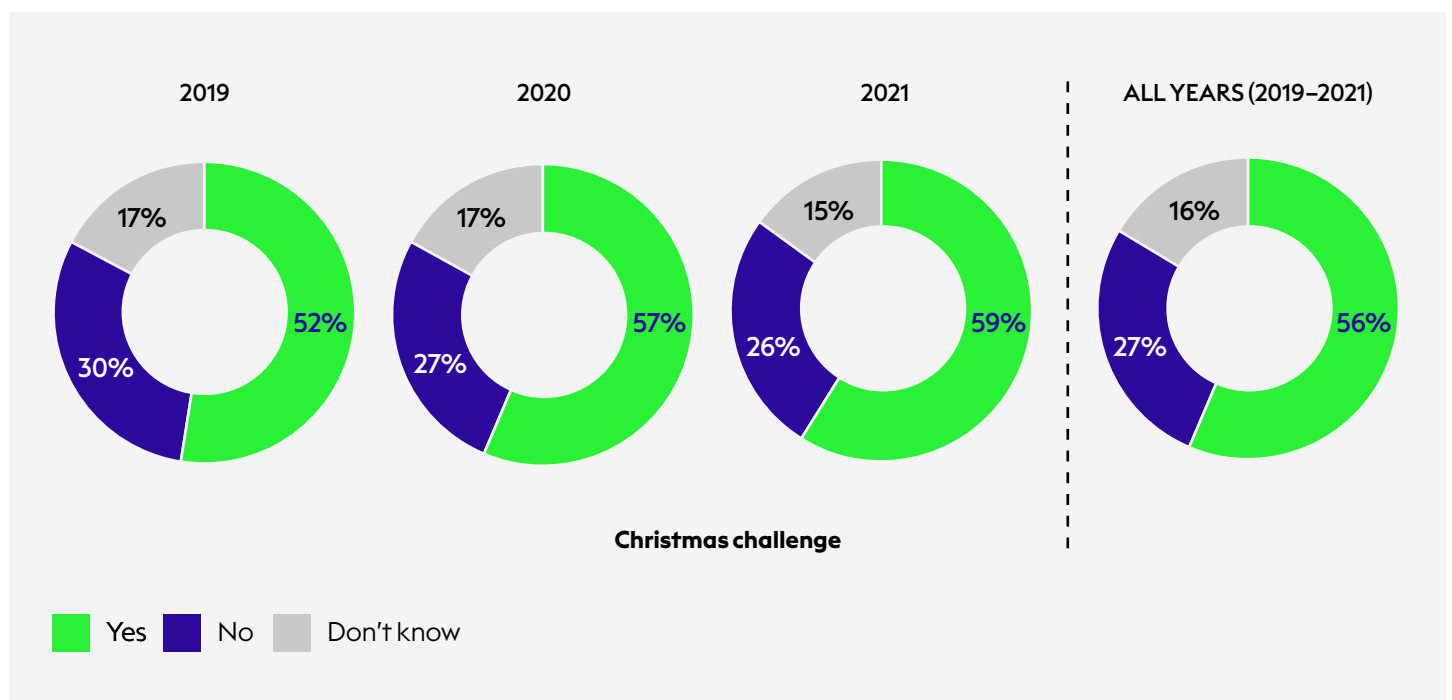
In 2021, nearly 6 in 10 (59%) of charitable organisations responding to the Christmas Challenge Impact Survey felt that their existing supporters had given more money than they normally do, a significant increase on the 52% first reported in 2019.

Fig 6. Christmas Challenge 2019–2021 Charity Impact Surveys: Increasing existing support<sup>14</sup>

### Christmas Challenge: Increasing existing support

Would you say that your current supporters gave more than they normally do?

All responses: 2019 = 519, 2020 = 732, 2021 = 873, All = 2,124



<sup>14</sup> 2018 question does not offer a 'Don't Know' option and so results are not directly comparable.

In the depth interviews, half of the charities spoken to feel that the Christmas Challenge leads to extra gifts being made by existing donors, which results in increased annual incomes overall.

Also, in terms of optimising support, the initial funding contact often leads to an ongoing and more involved relationship between charity and Champion.



**I think for some people, they donated to Big Give as an extra donation. They'd given before, so they were donating more.**

Andrew Hollingsworth, previously Business Director at The Passage



**You can also connect with Champion funders to boost your campaign target, and it's a wonderful way to introduce these new funders to your cause.**

Jacqui Clinton, Fundraising Director, Tommy's

**A lot of the people that donate on a regular basis, tend to donate by the Big Give to us ... We find that that's their additional donation to us, is by the Big Give.**

Anonymous charity user of Big Give platform

**Some charities we've supported for a number of years. For example, Canine Partners ... we actually have a puppy in training called Candis ... these are dogs that assist people with their lives in various ways. It's lovely to be able to actually follow the progress from being a tiny little puppy to now, a young adult in training. And so we're able to keep that relationship going, and that's quite nice.**

Christine Blackford, Director, Newhall Publishing



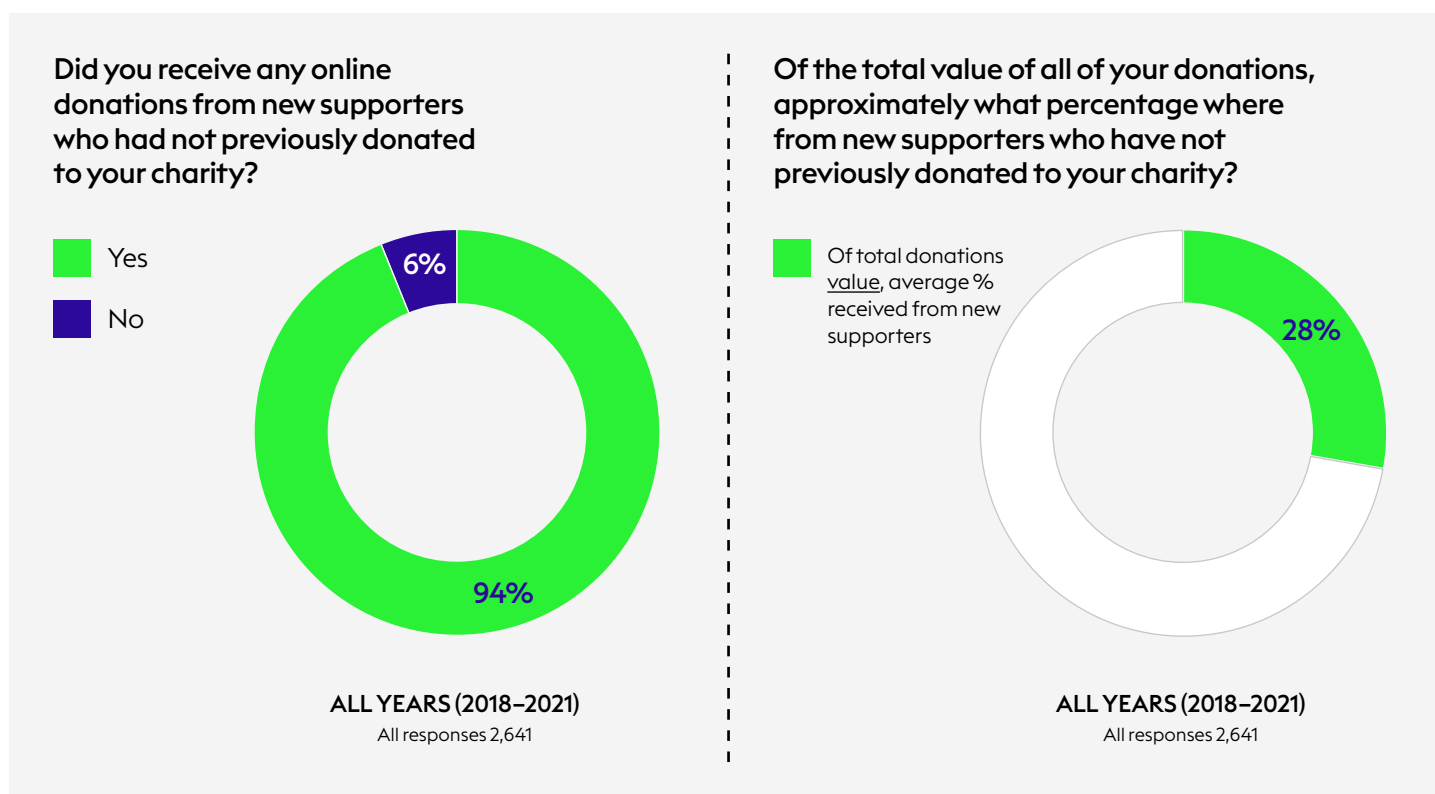
### 3.0 Impact on Charities: Profile

In addition to maximising support from existing donors, those participating believe that the Christmas Challenge also allows them to access new donors, with over 9 in 10 charities receiving online

donations from new supporters and these donations amounting to around a quarter of the total value of all donations received through the campaign.

Fig 7. Christmas Challenge 2018–2021 Charity Impact Surveys: Impact of new donors<sup>15</sup>

### Christmas Challenge: Impact of new donors



It's a great way to engage with your existing supporters ... but the thing that I've seen is that our work seems to be attracting new donors ... I suspect that what is happening is that people are monitoring the Big Give website ... to see what charities are at the top of the pile who've got matched funding remaining, and then they'll plump for that.

Philip Holmes,  
Founder, Pipal Tree



One of the benefits of working with Big Give is that it has expanded our access to new individuals; when you're a small arts charity, and you don't have a significant development operation, raising money from individuals can be quite labour-intensive. The Big Give Christmas Challenge has given us access to a number of additional small gifts.

Anna Rowe, Chair,  
Alexander Whitley  
Dance Company

<sup>15</sup> Results are aggregated and averaged across all Big Give Christmas Challenge Impact Surveys conducted 2018–2021, and so an individual charitable organisation may appear more than once if they participated in Big Give/responded to the Impact Survey in multiple years.

Indeed, half of the charities spoken to in the depth interviews identify how Big Give has its own cohort of donors, who prefer to give through Big Give and who may not be accessible otherwise.

In addition to new individual online donors, charities interviewed also relate how participating in the Christmas Challenge has afforded them access to larger-scale funders through the Champion match funding.



The Big Give platform has created their own donor base who are very, very engaged with it ... and who love the match giving elements ... They would have seen this [DEC] appeal in different places, most likely, but they've still chosen to give to it through this platform, that clearly is an indication that they value the [Big Give], they value the way it does things and they value the match giving that's attached to the gift as a result.



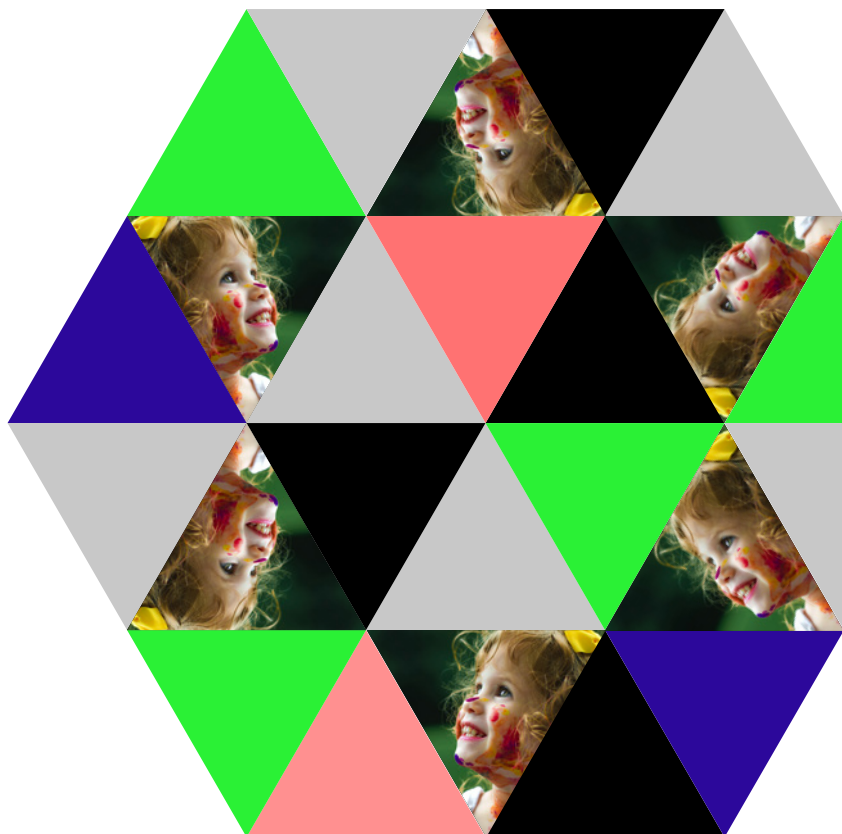
Simon Beresford, Director of Fundraising & Marketing, Disasters Emergency Committee



The first time we did [Big Give], a well known dance donor ... supported us through the Big Give. Our fundraiser knew of this donor, although they had not supported us before. So, there is an opportunity to connect with donors that you haven't otherwise got a link to, and that is definitely beneficial.



Anna Rowe, Chair, Alexander Whitley Dance Company





The high level of charities accessing new donors and donations suggests that Big Give is helping to raise the profile of some charities. Indeed, three-quarters (74%) of those charities responding to the Christmas Challenge Impact Surveys agree that “taking part in the campaign raised their organisation’s profile”.<sup>16</sup>

Charities highlight how Big Give’s platform provides additional exposure, ‘a shop window’ for donors looking for a charity to support.

**It’s such a great opportunity for a donor to come along and look at who they want to give to, look across all of the charities that are taking part in the campaign and make that decision. I think it’s a fantastic vehicle, not just for charities but for donors as well ... It’s a really nice platform to be able to look and filter through ... somebody could come along and say, I want to support young people, and so they can filter through the Christmas Challenge and find the charities that are supporting young people. It gives them the opportunity to find out which aligns best, what they think is the greatest need.**

Lisa Thomas, Philanthropy Manager, The Prince’s Trust

**I think raising the profile by featuring on the Big Give website, I think that is useful ... you’re in the shop window. So I think that kind of exposure must help ... You’re attracting the attention of a lot of people – those little seeds that are being scattered around the place, you never know how they germinate.**

Philip Holmes, Founder, Pipal Tree

**Bees for Development have taken part nearly every year since Big Give began and have found it a wonderful way to engage with our supporters. We of course, would recommend involvement in the Big Give campaign to others, it really does give charities a voice and a wonderful platform for a wider reach.**

Jenny Handley, Head of Fundraising,  
Bees for Development



<sup>16</sup> Results are aggregated and averaged across all Big Give Christmas Challenge Impact Surveys conducted 2018–2021, and so an individual charitable organisation may appear more than once if they participated in Big Give/responded to the Impact Survey in multiple years.



Champions also comment on the profile of Big Give helping to cut through the crowded world of charitable giving, particularly at Christmas.

Beyond raising initial awareness, around 9 in 10 charities surveyed believe that participating in the Christmas Challenge helps them develop their relationships with both existing donors (92%) and new donors (89%).



All around Christmas, there is so much noise in fundraising ... the world of giving all comes to a head at this time of year when we're naturally thinking about those in society who are not as fortunate as those who are more privileged ... The Big Give ... has a reputation of its own ... Big Give means the Christmas Challenges, it's almost synonymous ... We have to make sure that we cut through ... the benefit of this partnership we've had with the Big Give, is that we can cut through a lot of the noise with that.

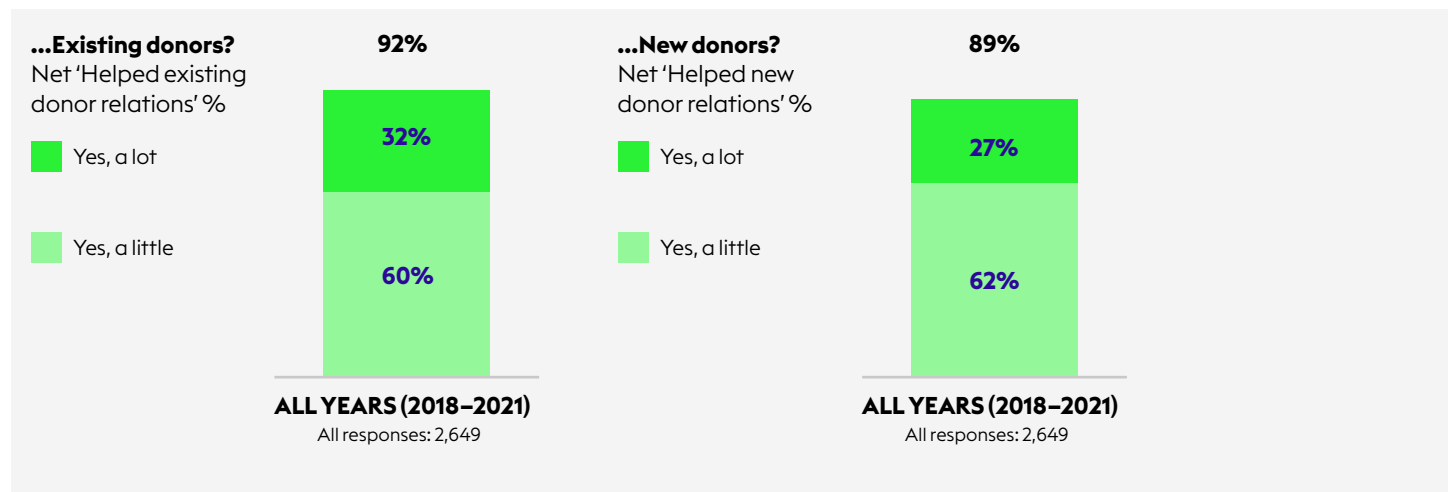


Grant Gordon, Chair,  
The Childhood Trust

Fig 8. Christmas Challenge 2018–2021 Charity Impact Surveys: Impact on donor relations<sup>17</sup>

## Christmas Challenge: Impact on Donor Relations

Would you say the campaign week helped your organisation to develop its relationships with...



Charities highlight how the Christmas Challenge provides a reason for them to communicate regularly with their supporters and that, in some cases, this has even led to new ways of working.



When we first got involved with Big Give [in 2009], I suppose that our fundraising was fairly traditional, certainly as far as the individual donors were concerned – a lot of it was done by Royal Mail. [Big Give] gave us a reason why donors who'd always given by post would actually come online and give ... It also meant that we began to communicate with more and more donors by email ... we had this reason to write, so "can we keep you updated by email?" It just changed the way we worked in lots of ways.



Andrew Hollingsworth,  
previously Business Director at The Passage

<sup>17</sup> Results are aggregated and averaged across all Big Give Christmas Challenge Impact Surveys conducted 2018–2021, and so an individual charitable organisation may appear more than once if they participated in Big Give/responded to the Impact Survey in multiple years.

## 4.0 Impact on Charities: Skills

In addition to the financial impact and profile raising, charities highlight a number of other positive impacts of being involved in Big Give's Christmas Campaign related to skills.

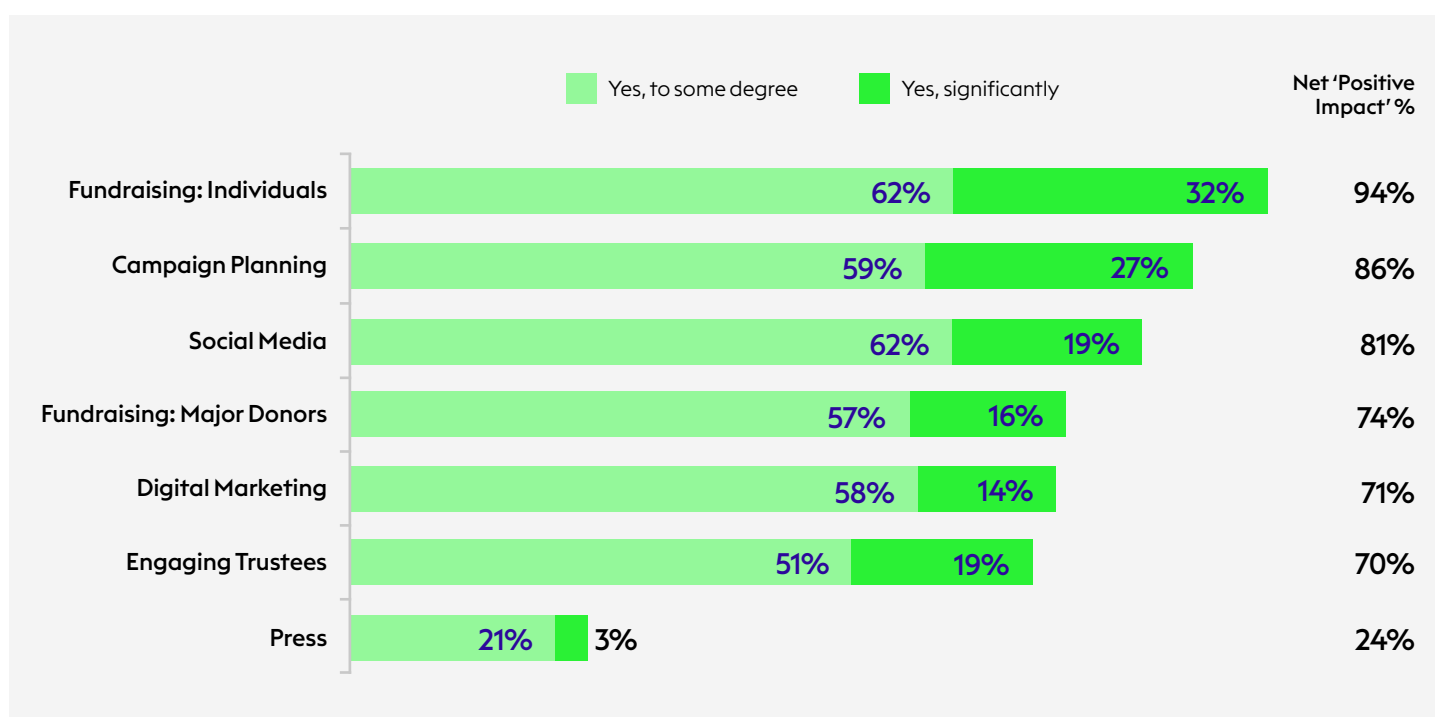
Over eight in ten of those responding to the Christmas Challenge Impact Surveys believe that the campaign has positively impacted on their organisation's campaign planning and/or social media skills.

Fig 9. Christmas Challenge 2018–2021 Charity Impact Surveys: Positive impacts experienced<sup>18</sup>

### Christmas Challenge: Positive Impact on Skills All Years 2018–2021

Has taking part in the Christmas Challenge positively impacted on your organisation in the following areas...

All responses: 2018–2021 = 2,635



Whilst only a quarter highlight a positive impact on their organisation's press activities, this most likely reflects that a) charities are already more well-versed in traditional press work and b) Big Give is primarily an online campaign.

Conversely, seven in ten (71%) believe that Big Give has positively impacted their digital skills, and reviewing this measure over time (Fig.10) shows a significant increase from the first measurement in 2018, when only 61% agreed that this was the case compared to 81% in the most recent survey.

<sup>18</sup> Results are aggregated and averaged across all Big Give Christmas Challenge Impact Surveys conducted 2018–2021, and so an individual charitable organisation may appear more than once if they participated in Big Give/responded to the Impact Survey in multiple years



In a similar vein, nearly 9 in 10 (88%) agree that taking part in the Christmas Challenge has increased their organisation's confidence in conducting digital fundraising.

It's probably the only really digital fundraising campaign that we do. So I think it has definitely improved our skills ... I think for the Crowdfunder campaign ... because we were so used to running fundraising campaigns by Big Give, that did help us. We already had the stewardship plan in place ... we know when we want to contact donors and say thank you, and we have that process all in place. When it came to running the Crowdfunder campaign, we were already 70% of the way there, it was just learning how to do it on a different platform.



Anonymous charity user of Big Give platform

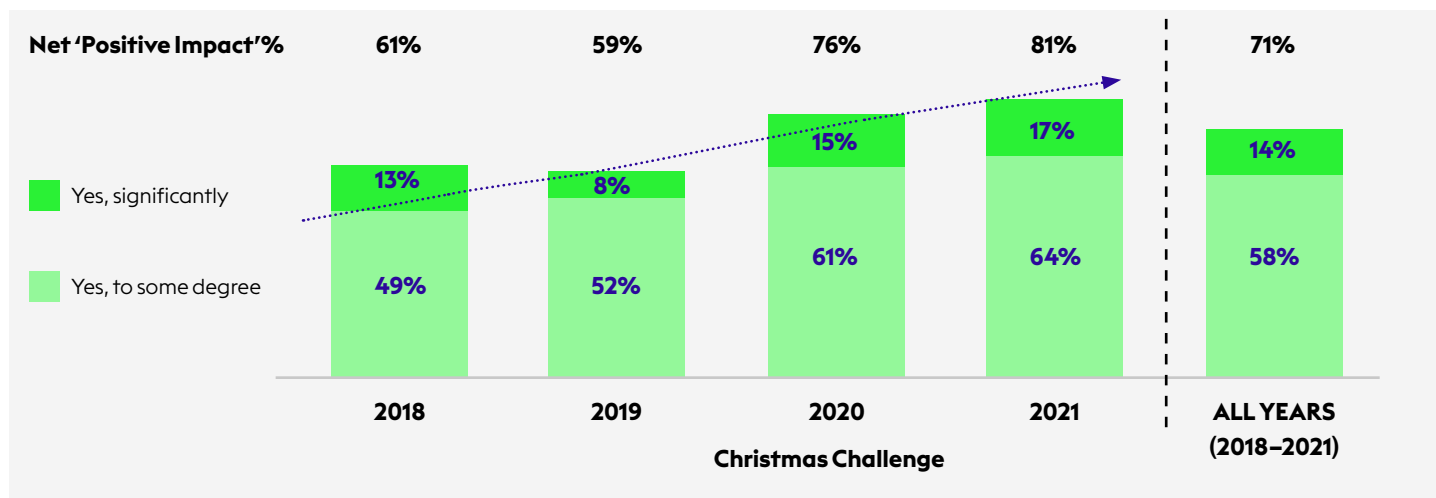
Fig 10. Christmas Challenge 2018–2021 Charity Impact Surveys: Positive impacts experienced

## Christmas Challenge: Positive Impact on Skills

### Impact on Digital Marketing over time

Has taking part in the Christmas Challenge positively impacted on your organisation in "Digital Marketing"?

All responses: 2018 = 525, 2019 = 510, 2020 = 728, 2021 = 872, All = 2,635



Sir Alec Reed identifies how assisting participating charities, particularly smaller organisations, to develop their fundraising and digital skills also benefits Champions and, ultimately, the end beneficiaries.

With small charities ... Big Give gives them a lot of training in fundraising as well. So we're getting even more benefit from our donation by the fact that small charities are learning a few tricks on fundraising. And small charities do a lot of good work. They operate in a lot of specialist areas.



Sir Alec Reed, Founder of Big Give

Within the qualitative interviews, a number of charities mentioned the ability to network and share experiences with other charities as another positive impact of being involved in Big Give, whilst one Champion highlighted the positives of being involved in a collective effort.



**I think there's the connection with other charities that are taking part in Big Give ... Sometimes you can feel like you're operating in a silo, so it's a nice connecting opportunity ... in some of the webinars, other charities will tell their stories about how they've approached the campaign ... there are lots of learnings from other people's successes and failures.**

Lisa Thomas, Philanthropy Manager, The Prince's Trust

**I think it's quite nice to be involved in something of the scale of the Big Give ... it's a good story, and when I go to our Trustees meeting, I always make a point of telling people what we're doing ... we just feel like we're contributing in a bigger way.**

Helen Perry, Chair, The Lakehouse Charitable Foundation



## 5.0 Christmas Challenge: A Call to Action

Almost all of those spoken to as part of this study – charities and Champions – commented on the timing of the Christmas Challenge as being a real positive as “people are just more philanthropic around Christmas time, aren’t they”.<sup>19</sup>

Further to this, the campaign being live for just 7-days is felt to work well by focusing minds on an urgent call to action – and not just for donors, but also for the charities themselves.



It’s very urgent, the fact that it is this condensed period of time, it really is a compelling ask to get somebody over the line ... It’s also really exciting, the interface is lovely. For donors and for charities, being able to see your tally going up during that campaign week is amazing and really exciting. And it is like an exciting way to fundraise, which we don’t always get. It’s a bit like the big telethons where you see the money rising up, it’s got that kind of feel to it.

Lisa Thomas, Philanthropy Manager, The Prince’s Trust

[Big Give focused] the staff team on fundraising, which was a good thing .... I think if we’d just been doing lots of Royal Mail campaigns that would have dribbled in, it wouldn’t have excited everybody in the same way, as “we’ve got seven days to do it”... It is a very measured campaign; you’ve got a target...and it focuses the mind a bit more on measuring fundraising.

Andrew Hollingsworth, previously Business Director at The Passage



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<sup>19</sup> Helen Perry, Chair, The Lakehouse Charitable Foundation



As shown, the 'excitement' of the Christmas Challenge can also translate into 'stress' for some charities. One of the charities interviewed explained that this stress related to securing their own match fund pledges, but the end results made it worthwhile.



**We always find getting pledge income really difficult and quite stressful. And then we breathe a sigh of relief when we know that we've got there, and then we can hopefully get the Champion funding ... I would say it's more stressful [than other fundraising channels], but more worthwhile. It's worth the stress, because we do raise a lot of money from it.**

Anonymous charity user  
of Big Give platform



For some, the long lead time required for securing the pledges can prove problematic.

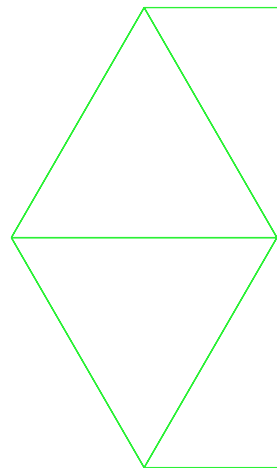
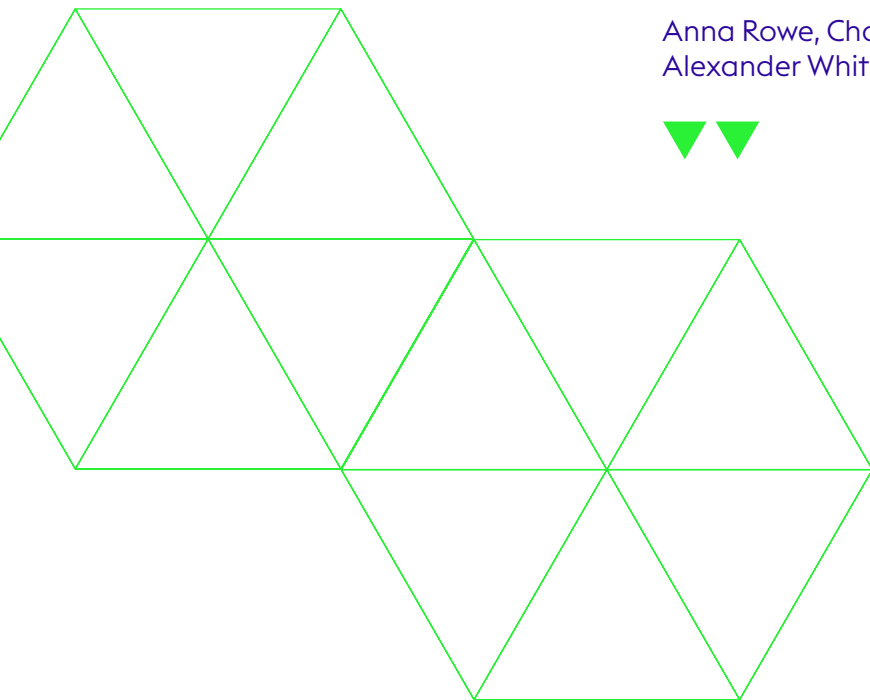


**Big Give Christmas Appeals – to get a partner charity involved in that and start thinking about Christmas in May time is quite an uphill struggle.**

Philip Holmes, Founder, Pipal Tree

**Right in the middle of August, you have to start thinking about Christmas fundraising. That can be problematic ... if you're trying to raise money from existing donors ... it can restrict the opportunity to ask them about something else because they're committed to supporting the organisation all the way from August through to when they pay their pledge in January .... if you've only got a small number of donors, and you tie them up in the Big Give for six months, you can't ask them for anything else in the meantime.**

Anna Rowe, Chair,  
Alexander Whitley Dance Company



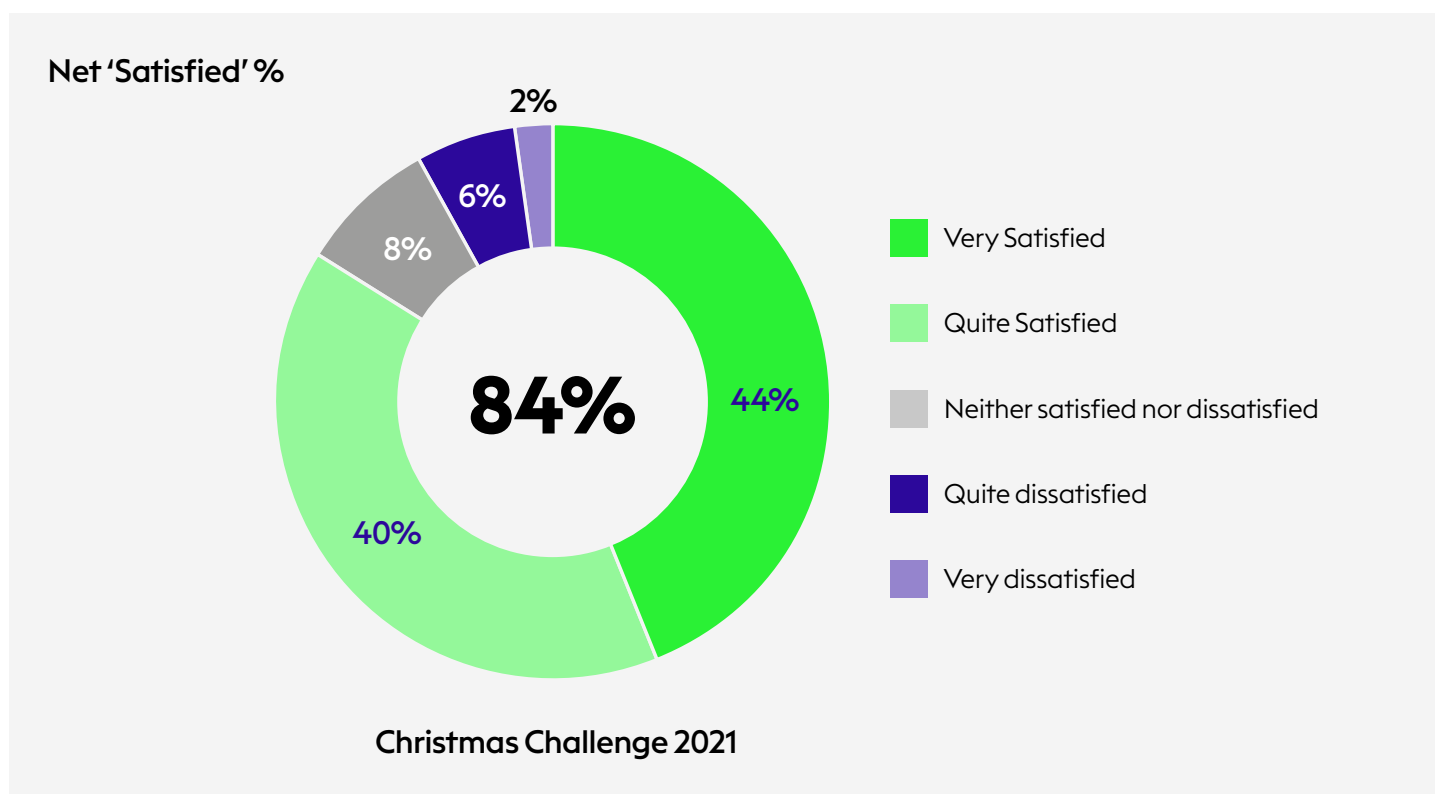
Despite these challenges, results from the 2021 Impact Survey show that over 8 in 10 charities responding are satisfied that the Christmas Challenge represents a good return on investment for the time and money spent.

Fig 12. Christmas Challenge 2021 Charity Impact Survey: Return on Investment

## Christmas Challenge 2021: Return on Investment

As an organisation, how satisfied are you that the value received from the campaign justifies the amount of time and money you invested in it (i.e. that it provided good return on investment)?

Christmas Challenge 2021, all responses: 862





As a result, nearly 9 in 10 (88%) of the charities responding to the 2021 Christmas Challenge Charity Impact Survey said that they would be interested in participating in another match funding campaign with Big Give in the future, and over half (52%) would be highly likely to recommend participating in the campaign to another charity, friend or colleague, with a further 36% likely to recommend.<sup>21</sup>



**I would absolutely recommend Big Give to other charities that want to take part in a fun, festive challenge to raise funds and increase awareness of their work. Our supporters love to get involved in our campaigns as they can double their gift and double their impact, which has also helped us to recruit new supporters.**

Jacqui Clinton, Fundraising Director, Tommy's

**I would recommend other charities to get involved with Big Give, as it's a great opportunity to engage with new donors and keep existing donors giving.**

Jane Page, Head of Fundraising, Classics for All

**We love the Big Give – the match-funding element is really motivating for our loyal supporters, and each year the profile of the Christmas Challenge brings us some brand new supporters too. We've taken part in the Christmas Challenge every year since 2010, enabling our partners to expand community Savings Groups and launch whole new projects every single year over the last 12 years. Thank you, Big Give!**

Rachel Lindley, CEO, Five Talents



<sup>21</sup> "Highly likely" is defined as those rating 9 or 10 on a scale of 0–10 where 0 = would not recommend at all and 10 = would definitely recommend, whilst likely is those rating 7 or 8. Results are based on 862 charities responding.

## 6.0 Impact on Champions

All three of the Champions spoken to for this review highlighted that the match funding “doubling their impact” and providing increased impetus for charities to fundraise themselves were the main positive impacts of Big Give from their perspective.

In addition, two Champions highlighted Big Give’s curation of the potential charities presented for funding and the confidence this provides in terms of due diligence as a positive benefit.



**We’re presented with a long list of projects to select from; we can rest assured that those projects and those charities have been checked and verified by Big Give, so we don’t have to worry about that from a governance point of view, that’s done for us.**

Christine Blackford, Director, Newhall Publishing

**I would know that the charities that were presented to us via Big Give, a lot of due diligence had been carried out on those charities, to ensure that they were credible and scalable and all of those interesting things.**

Helen Perry, Chair, The Lakehouse Charitable Foundation



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<sup>19</sup> Helen Perry, Chair, The Lakehouse Charitable Foundation

The founder of Big Give, Sir Alec Reed, himself identifies curation as a key benefit of Big Give, both in terms of due diligence and the wider financial logistics of any campaign.



**It's reassuring. It's a lazy giver's way out, really – you don't have to do the research because other people have done it ... For the Champions, it's a doddle. I mean, you don't even have to send out separate cheques to charities, you just send one to the Big Give, and they do it.**



Sir Alec Reed,  
Founder of Big Give

Whilst all of the Champions spoken to for this study reveal their identity to those charities they match-fund and, in all cases, have ongoing relationships with many of those supported, one Champion did highlight how using Big Give as an intermediary could prove beneficial for some funders who may prefer to remain anonymous.



**[I recommended Big Give] only the other day actually. I was talking to somebody who is advising an organisation considering setting up a foundation, and they were concerned that they were going to get endless queries from charities wanting money ... I think what they were looking for was a fairly easy way of giving money, that didn't mean that they were going to be subjected to endless requests, and so, having that intermediary can be quite helpful.**



Christine Blackford, Director,  
Newhall Publishing

## 7.0 Impact on the Wider Sector

Prior to Big Give's establishment in 2007, there had been some forays in the match funding space within the charitable sector. Rob Williamson, Chief Executive of Community Foundation, writes that, as early as 1990, Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation joined forces to offer a £2 million endowment match challenge, with three foundations each having to raise £1.34 million to get a matching share of £667,000 to achieve a £2 million endowment.<sup>22</sup>

Between 2001 and 2005, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's Time for Growth scheme invested £1 million in ten community foundations, giving them each the target of achieving a £2million endowment, resulting in £19.5 million being raised in total.<sup>22</sup>

Even with these initiatives, match funding in the UK was very much in its infancy at the time of Big Give's launch. Sir Alec Reed, the founder of Big Give, wanting to donate funds from his family charity, discovered that it was easier said than done.

<sup>22</sup> Rob Williamson, A Match Made in Giving, Philanthropy Impact, October 2013, <https://www.philanthropy-impact.org/article/match-made-giving>



Well, it was really I suppose, funds coming from a family charity, and the difficulty of giving money away intelligently without building up an organisation to do so. I didn't want to employ lots of people to give the money away. And I didn't want to spend my time giving it away. So that was the beginning of Big Give. I had a million pounds to give away, and no system for giving it.

So I put up this million pounds that I wanted to give away and said to the charities: "first come first served for matching" so while it's there you can match your funds. Anyway, the million pounds went in 45 minutes.

It was a rough and ready solution to that problem. And then I added another layer – challenge giving. We put up so much, we will match the giving of the large donors for the charity, and then the whole lot gets matched by the smaller donors.



Sir Alec Reed,  
Founder of Big Give

Big Give was almost certainly the first (non-governmental) national platform set up for match funding in the UK, and broke new ground for the charity sector, as acknowledged by Cath Dovey.



**[Big Give has] done a number of very important things. It has broken ground. And I think it continues to be a ground-breaking and trailblazing platform, 15 years into its history. Creating a national platform, bringing end donors in direct contact with charities, doing due diligence on organisations, leveraging in money. It has pioneered ways of making that happen, whether that's technology, whether that's people, whether that's research, whether that's partnerships, and it continues to refine its model.**

Cath Dovey, Co-founder of The Beacon Collaborative and Chair of Rosa, The UK Fund for Women and Girls



In the depth interviews, a number of charities also highlight the impact Big Give and the Christmas Challenge has had on the wider charity sector and charitable giving, be that in terms of online giving and the platform itself, or in thought-leadership around match funding.



**I wonder whether it's accelerated the movement into online fundraising. Obviously, there are other online fundraising initiatives, some with matched funding, that aren't related to Big Give. I suppose they may have been developed anyway, but given that Big Give moved ahead of the pack, as it were ... they're coming up in the slipstream of Big Give.**

Andrew Hollingsworth, previously Business Director at The Passage

**All the investment that they've put into that platform as a mechanism ... is not something that the DEC could have invested in to create ourselves. It basically wouldn't otherwise exist if it wasn't for the fact that it has been generated by the Big Give themselves ... I know over the years, they've done research into the impact of match giving and shared that publicly and with the sector. I think that sharing of knowledge and information around the impact of match giving has certainly been influential and beneficial.**

Simon Beresford, Director of Fundraising & Marketing,  
Disasters Emergency Committee



The success of Big Give, and the UK Government getting on board with match funding, has led to even greater initiatives. In 2008, the Government launched its £13 million Grassroots Programme for England, which matched gifts into local endowments. In addition, 2008 saw the launch of the £200 million fund to boost giving to universities, managed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The HEFCE scheme ran for three years and raised £540 million for English universities.<sup>23</sup>

Since 2013, the Government (through DFID and now FCDO) has established UK Aid Match, which provides match funds for many Disasters Emergency Committee appeals and other charity campaigns. For every £1 donated to a UK Aid Match charity appeal, the government contributes £1 of UK aid (up to £2 million), to help these projects go further in changing and saving lives.

The first phase of UK Aid Match, launched between 2013 and 2016, funded 59 appeals. An estimated 3.6 million people in the UK donated to match-funded appeals. A total of £120 million went to 42 charities operating in 22 countries and running projects including health, education and water, sanitation and hygiene, which are expected to benefit 19 million people.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, Big Give itself has been the recipient of Government match funds. A proportion of the UK Aid Match fund for DEC relief campaigns is normally allocated to Big Give, so that match funding can be facilitated through its online platform and unique set of donors.

Furthermore, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport recently made an award of £2.3 million to Big Give's 'Women and Girls Match Fund', the aim being to raise £5m for the Women & Girls sector across England and Scotland through match funding campaigns whilst increasing the resilience, skills and profile of Women & Girls charities. The project will also help to create a long-term philanthropic legacy for giving to Women & Girls organisations.<sup>25</sup>



<sup>23</sup> The Match Game, Philanthropy Impact, October 2013, <https://www.philanthropy-impact.org/article/match-game>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/international-development-funding/uk-aid-match>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/14-charities-to-receive-tampon-tax-funding>

# Looking towards the next 15 years...

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Charities and Champions spoken to as part of this research are generally very positive about Big Give, with few issues raised or changes required. However, some charities did make suggestions as to potential additions to Big Give's future offering, including:

- Increased direct access to donors (assuming they have given permission to be contacted) to allow charities to further develop donor relations through updates, saying 'thank you', etc.
- Maximising impact through developing further partnerships such as those being established with Environmental Funders Network and Rosa, The UK Fund for Women and Girls.
- More targeted campaigns both at Christmas and the rest of the year, focusing on specific charity segments, such as the Arts, Children, Environment, Health, etc.
- Increased advocacy for match funding across the Third Sector, Government and beyond.
- Development of recommendation algorithms to point donors in the direction of charities they may wish to support based on their previous gifting choices.
- Increased functionality around individual challenge fundraising, and the ability to link that to match funds.
- Review all processes with a view to making things simpler for all involved – charities, Champions and individual donors. For example, extending beyond credit card payments to facilitate greater giving from foundations and trusts.

At a fundamental level, Big Give's aim is to "multiply impact by matching donations" and, in increasingly challenging economic conditions, continuing to help maximise charitable giving is paramount.



**It is particularly noteworthy that in spite of the hardships that have been felt across UK households over recent years, the Big Give has generated increasing levels of public donations year on year – a testament to the generosity of the British public and to the efficacy of Big Give's match funding platform that is translating this generosity into on-the-ground action through trusted charities. The value that Big Give provides to charities is clear from their enthusiasm to reapply year after year. I would heartily recommend other trusts and foundations, to put up the seed money to get this support rolling in.**



Heather Stevens, Chair,  
The Waterloo Foundation



Sir Alec Reed suggests that one of the key focuses for Big Give to date has been to ensure that obtaining the match funding from Champions is not a limiting factor to growth. Once achieved, the desire is to develop additional themed campaigns to generate more targeted giving.



**The limiting factor is getting enough support – getting enough Champions. And now, the Champions have grown, we have got more. It's more of a match now, we're beginning to satisfy most of the people that apply ... [Next] we want to develop other Big Give [campaigns], especially for the climate – more themed giving I think, and just growing.**

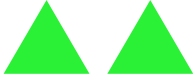
Sir Alec Reed, Founder of Big Give

**The Garfield Weston Foundation has been delighted to partner with The Big Give over many years and, more recently, for the inaugural Green Give Challenge. For charities, supporting fundraisers and encouraging donors has never been more important.**

Philippa Charles, Director, The Garfield Weston Foundation

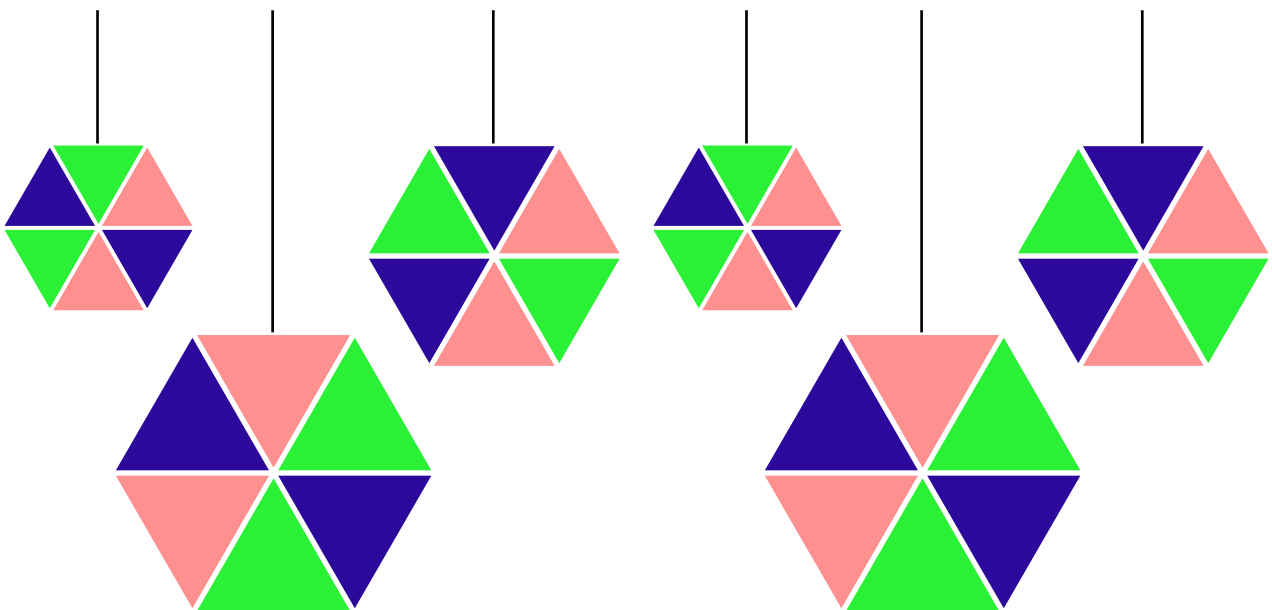


Cath Dovey believes that Big Give could be pivotal in the future of UK philanthropy, as one initiative providing an acceleration effect in charitable giving.



**For me, the most exciting thing is the next 15 years. Going forwards, Big Give has a really important place. We all need to get behind the few key initiatives that can give us that acceleration effect in philanthropy, and I really think that the Big Give platform is one of those. They could be a really, really pivotal player in the UK philanthropy market.**

Cath Dovey, Co-founder of The Beacon Collaborative and Chair of Rosa, The UK Fund for Women and Girls





The Researchery

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