

Introducing the online donor giving insights report

The last two years have been tumultuous for charities, with the Covid-19 pandemic fundamentally changing the way organisations fundraise. Cash giving was almost non-existent in 2020 as society moved to contactless methods of payment. In 2021 cash giving remained below historic levels, with the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) reporting that as little as 7% of donors gave cash in January 2021, compared to between 30 and 40% in previous Januaries.

As cash giving steadily declines, opportunities to engage more people in digital fundraising and giving increases. Charities who can adopt, harness and optimise the intelligent technology available for online giving, will see the huge benefits it brings – such as being able to better steward donors and set ‘ask strings’ based on highest previous or most recent contribution.

This report looks at the data from Engaging Networks clients in the UK who are taking one-off and regular donations via card payments through our platform. It draws out key metrics from 2021 and compares the performance to previous years, along with a case study from Freedom from Torture, tips, and insights to help your charity thrive in 2022 and beyond.

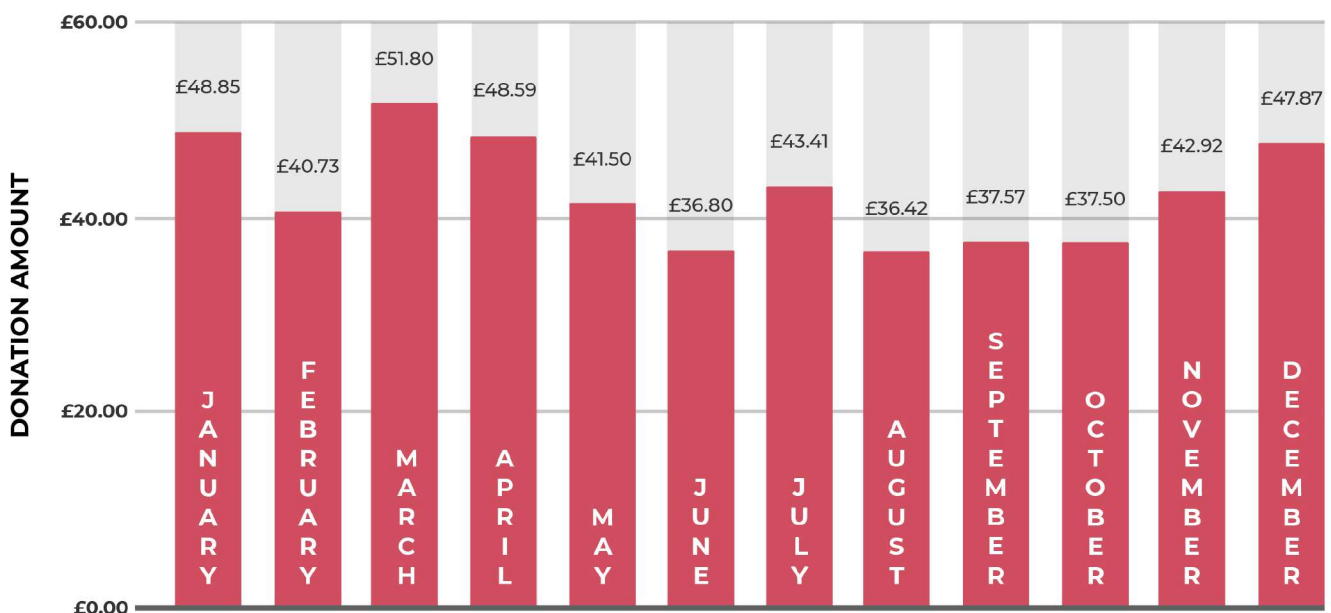
A snapshot of online giving in 2021

This report looks at aggregated data from UK-based clients who have been fundraising on the Engaging Networks platform for a minimum of three years. The report includes one-off donations and regular giving through recurring card payments. The report does not include regular payments taken via direct debit.

2021 in review:

The average value of a one-off donation was £43.35. In 2021, March saw the highest average one-off donation values with August seeing the lowest average one-off donation value. However, the month with the least donations was June. Does June present an untapped fundraising opportunity for charities?

2021 One-off donation values per month



June: an untapped giving opportunity

Given there is so much going on in November, during Giving Tuesday, and in December when charities are in full swing with their Christmas appeals and campaigns, does June present an untapped giving opportunity? Here are two ideas for fundraising activities during the month of June.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Weekend

On 6th February 2022 the Queen celebrates her Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the country. There are a number of events planned to celebrate this momentous occasion, culminating in a four day UK bank holiday weekend from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June. The Queen is patron to 510 charities in Britain. These charities should take this unique opportunity to highlight their important work, and the impact they make, and encourage donations in honour of not only the Queen's Platinum Jubilee but her official birthday too.

Major sporting events

June is packed full of major global sporting events, such as Wimbledon, the Roland Garros French Open, the US Women's and Men's Golf Majors and the 24h Le Mans, which celebrates its 90th anniversary this year. Could your charity tap into the popularity of these events and create fundraising or donation opportunities?

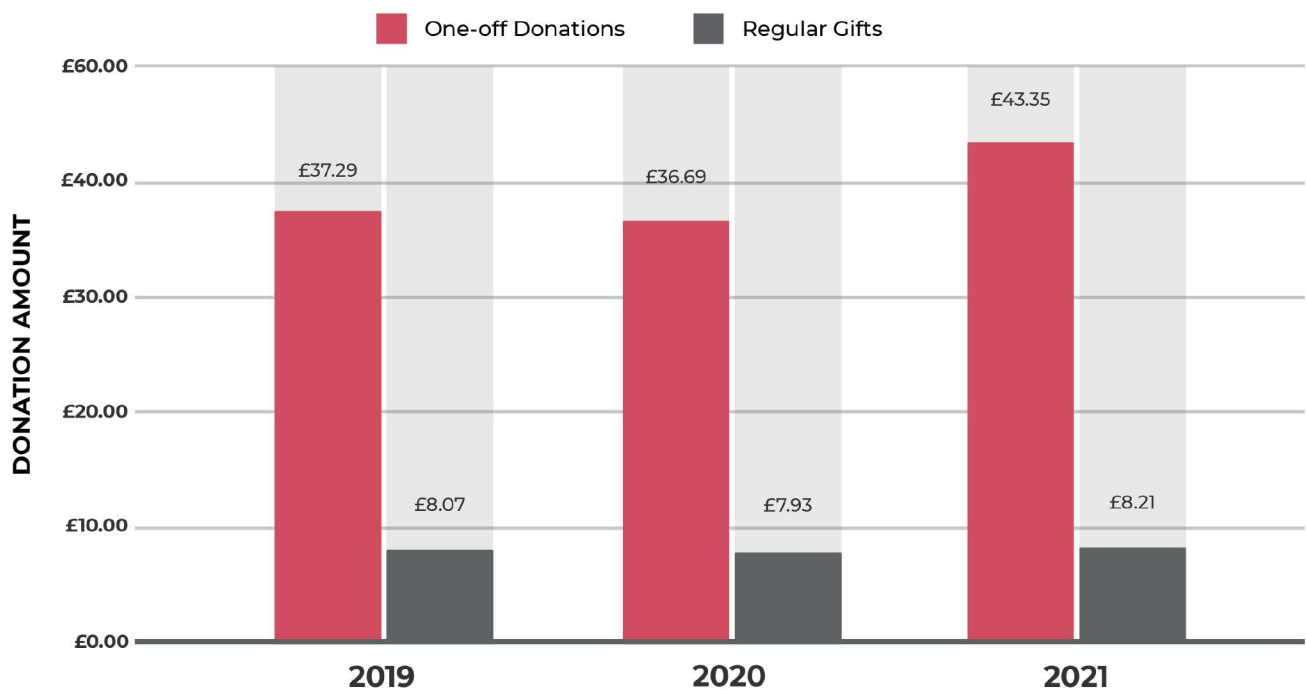
The average donation value of a regular gift in 2021 was £8.21, which unsurprisingly remained steady throughout the year.

2021 Regular gift values per month



How did 2021 compare to previous years?

Year-on-year comparison



As we can see, both one-off and recurring gifts have increased from 2020 to 2021 by 18% and 3.5% respectively. There was a slight decrease from 2019 to 2020 of 1.6% for one-off donations and 1.7% for recurring gifts.

Comparing 2019 to 2021, there has been an increase of 16% in one-off donations and a small increase of 1.7% in recurring gifts.

Top day for giving

30th November saw the most donations given in a single day, which was Giving Tuesday. The average one-off donation was £45.22, up 4.3% compared to the average donation value this year, and the average regular gift donation was £8.22.

Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving, where people are encouraged to do something meaningful for charities, such as making a donation, volunteering their time or skills or campaigning for a better world. It occurs after Black Friday and Cyber Monday, which is when retailers drop their prices after Thanksgiving in the U.S and people snap up bargains in time for Christmas. Giving Tuesday offers an antidote to the excesses of capitalism on those two days and encourages people to consider helping causes close to their heart.

Given its proximity to Christmas, Giving Tuesday can present a dilemma for charities. Should they focus their efforts on trying to raise money on the biggest giving day of the year - Giving Tuesday raised £20.2M for UK charities in 2020 - or put all their efforts into their Christmas appeals? In 2021, Engaging Network clients used Giving Tuesday as an opportunity to launch their Christmas campaigns and reaped the benefits.



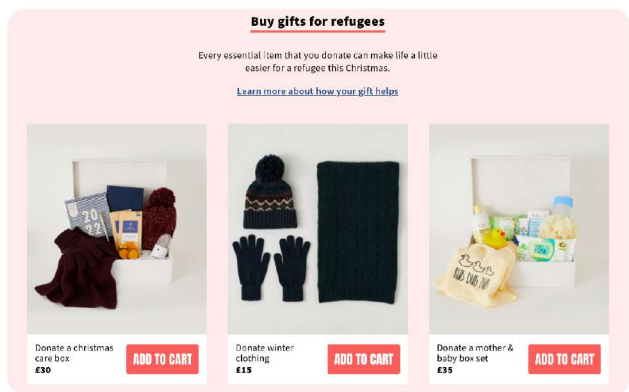
In 2020 the human rights charity, Freedom from Torture, received a great response to their Giving Tuesday fundraising email. So, when it came to planning their 2021 Christmas campaign it was clear that Giving Tuesday should be a key moment again.

Together with digital mobilisation specialists, Forward Action, the charity decided to double down on testing around the Giving Tuesday 'moment' to generate both income and insights. The result was a Christmas campaign that inspired more supporters to give and raised more money online for the charity than ever before.

Bringing Christmas forward

The campaign kicked off with launch emails in early November. Rather than waiting for the consumerist bonanza of the Black Friday weekend to finish, Freedom from Torture joined in by sending their own Black Friday email inviting subscribers to choose compassion, not consumerism.

The ask was to make a tangible donation, which would help the charity provide essential items for a torture survivor who has had a long and difficult journey to safety. The team also sent multiple emails on the day itself, and afterwards.



Christmas is such a busy season, with so many emails going out early in December from charities and companies alike, that it can be hard to get cut-through. Giving Tuesday provided the perfect opportunity for Freedom from Torture to test key areas of their fundraising asks, which would allow the team to optimise value for the rest of the campaign.

This included a test to find out whether it was more effective to drive supporters to the standard donation page to make a one-off or regular gift, or to send them to the newly created custom 'Christmas Gifts for Refugees' page where donors could purchase gift items and feel as though they were actually giving a Christmas present.

"Early on the test results showed that the virtual shop was a really effective ask, providing donors with something meaningful and practical to give to survivors. This was one of the many learnings that led to Christmas 2021 being our most successful online fundraising campaign to date. Our top tip for other charities would be to embed a culture of testing and learning to see what works best for your audience."

Giacomo Vezzani

Senior Digital Officer at Freedom From Torture

In partnership with

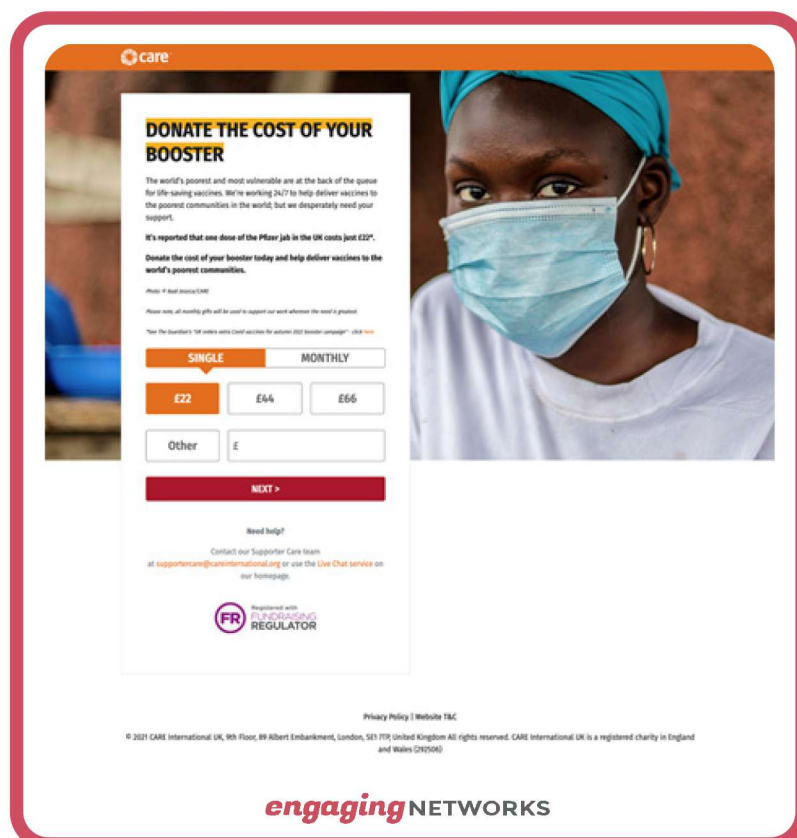
**Forward
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Three ways to optimise donations in 2022

Whilst clients of Engaging Networks have seen an increase in both one-off and recurring gifts in 2021, there are always ways to optimise and improve the donor experience. Here are three ways to help improve your fundraising in 2022 and beyond.

1. Nudge desired behaviour

Research shows that having suggested donation amounts - whether they are one-off donations or recurring gifts - helps nudge desired behaviour and sees an uplift in donations. Test increasing the suggested amounts, based on your average amounts. The lowest suggested one-off gift amount should be similar to the average recurring donation and the highest amount should be at least double the most frequent recurring donation. CARE International UK uses a 1:2:3 ratio, as seen below.



2. Show the value proposition

Donors are more likely to donate if they can clearly see where their money is going and the impact their donation will make. A 2020 Behavioral Nudging Study by Simon-Kucher & Partners found that, when given examples of what could be achieved with each donation amount, 40% of study participants chose to donate a higher amount than those who were not provided with the nudge.

The screenshot shows a mobile donation interface for 'Refuge'. At the top, there's a logo and a 'Secure Donation' icon. A pink banner reads 'With your donation we can save lives.' Below it, a dark box contains the text: 'At Refuge, we support thousands of women and children who turn to us when they're trying to escape domestic abuse. Help us be there for every woman and child who needs us, by donating today.'

There are two main buttons: 'Give Monthly' (highlighted) and 'Give Just Once'. Below these are three steps: '1 Amount', '2 Details', and '3 Payment'. The 'Amount' step shows a grid of donation options: £3, £5, £10, £15, £25, and £50. There is also an 'Other amount' input field.

Below the grid, three paragraphs describe the impact of different donation amounts:

- £5 a month could go towards providing emotional support to a child.** 90% of domestic abuse in the home happens in the presence of a child. Your regular gift could help children to overcome the trauma of witnessing or experiencing domestic abuse.
- £10 a month could give a woman her independence back.** Women are often forced to stop working by their abusers, or they have to leave their jobs when they escape abuse. Your regular gift could provide employment and financial advice from our specialist staff, to help give a woman back her independence and support her back into work.
- £15 a month could provide essentials for a woman arriving at a refuge.** Every day, women escaping life-threatening situations seek safety in our refuges. Many arrive with little more than the clothes they are wearing. Your gift could provide toiletries, food and clothing to help a woman through her first night.

A pink 'Continue' button is located below the impact text. At the bottom, there is a dark footer with contact information, a 'Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR' logo, and a disclaimer: 'Photos are posed by models to protect the confidentiality of the women and children we support.'

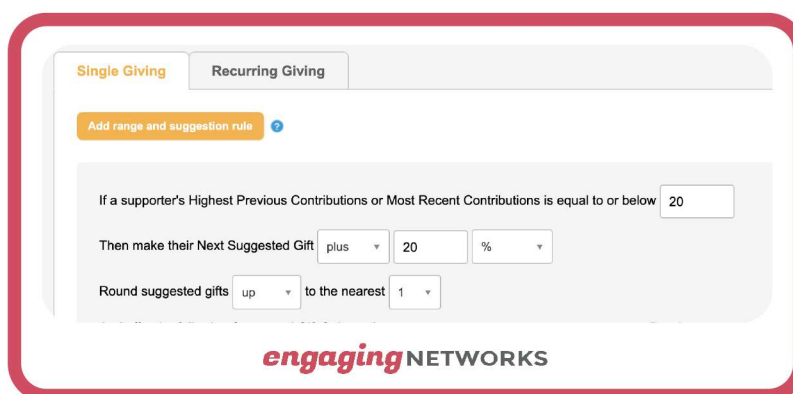
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3. Enable the 'next suggested gift' feature

Engaging Networks uses intelligence to suggest a donor's next gift amount based on their previous highest previous contribution. By enabling and setting up the 'ask strings' in this feature, your donors are prompted to donate a higher amount than their previous donation, helping you to raise more money for your cause.

Brandon Fuller, *Chief Strategist* at digital agency *Raise the Roots* offers this pro tip.

"If you're struggling to set the 'ask string' rules for each range of highest previous contributions, ask your direct mail supplier what rules they use in their mailings as the 'next suggested gift' has been used for years as a strategy in direct mail fundraising."



Conclusion

Despite 2021 still being a tumultuous year for charities, with uncertainty around face-to-face events, charities on Engaging Networks saw an uplift in online donations and fundraising from the previous year.

One-off gifts increased by 15% in 2021 and we believe there is a real opportunity to further increase this by testing donation values, offering value propositions and enabling the 'next suggested gift' feature.

Looking at our data, June offers an opportunity for charities to tap into upcoming global events, such as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as well as the myriad of international sporting events.

Often charities struggle to create meaningful and engaging campaigns for Giving Tuesday, as well as trying to get cut-through on this global day of giving. We've seen the most success from our clients who use Giving Tuesday as an opportunity to launch their Christmas appeals and campaigns. Instead of spreading your time, resource and budget across two campaigns in a very tight timeframe, consider combining them for maximum effect, like Freedom from Torture.

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