



Supporter experience: the **future** of fundraising

BECAUSE HAPPY PEOPLE GIVE
MORE AND GIVE FOR LONGER

***"Supporter experience is not just a
"nice to have" - it's essential."***

Executive summary

1. Giving is emotional. Supporters give to your cause because of a deeply personal, individual connection they have with you. It matters how they feel about you, because **supporters who feel loyal to your cause will support you more** - and support you for longer.

2. This is based on robust evidence. Over ten years, we at About Loyalty have conducted extensive research into loyalty and the supporter experience. This research has proven that **commitment, satisfaction and trust** are the most important drivers of supporter loyalty, which is in turn shaped by the supporter experience.

3. If you measure something, you change it. Commitment, satisfaction and trust are the most important indicators of how supporters feel about you by a significant margin. **Organisations should prioritise and track their commitment, satisfaction and trust** to make the greatest impact on their supporter experience.

4. New research, more results, same drivers. From global supporter surveys to national institutions, this report contains **never-before-seen research and case studies** to demonstrate that, however much our society and the sector changes, the things that drive giving by donors don't. You can read more in Part II.

5. Every team should be talking about this. The supporter experience belongs at the heart of the organisation - inside and out. **Measuring, tracking and reporting on supporter loyalty as an emotional KPI** is just as important as tracking transactional KPIs (like repeat giving).

6. Supporter experience is not just a "nice to have" - it's essential. Charities and nonprofits cannot afford to miss out on the benefits for their fundraising - and for their audience - which can be unlocked by investing in the supporter experience.

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Introduction: state of the sector

By Harpreet Kondel, Chair of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising

The last decade has brought extraordinary change to both the world and the charity sector.

As highlighted in the 2025 CAF UK Giving Report, fewer people than ever gave to charity in 2024 - with affordability cited as the main reason^[1]. Factor in the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, new data regulations such as GDPR, and rising political and social unrest, and it's clear that the ways in which people connect with causes have been reshaped forever.

In the face of these pressures, the fundraising sector has undergone its own transformation. Inspired by the Commission on the Donor Experience^[2], many organisations

have begun to place supporters – not just donations – at the heart of their strategies.

In this shifting environment, retaining supporters is more vital than ever. Charities increasingly recognise that loyalty is not built on transactions, but on experiences – on trust, connection, and the sense of being valued. Investment in supporter experience is growing, fuelled by the understanding that long-term commitment depends on cultivating the emotions that matter most.

Supporter experience is about more than good service; it is about forging emotional bonds that inspire people to stay, give, and advocate for the

“In challenging times, understanding and investing in the supporter experience is not just good practice – it is essential.”



causes they believe in. Loyalty is rooted in these feelings – and growing them must be central to every supporter development plan and communication.

This report embodies that mission. Drawing on a decade of About Loyalty's research – hundreds of thousands of supporter voices and a robust, evidence-based methodology – it offers a deep understanding of what makes supporters stay.

The insights provide a roadmap for refining and embedding excellent experiences, enabling charities to build stronger, more resilient relationships.

In challenging times, understanding and investing in the supporter experience is not just good practice – it is essential. This work ensures that every supporter feels valued, understood, and inspired to remain part of our journey for years to come.



Harpreet Kondel
BA (Hons) PG Dip IDM MCIOF
Chair, Chartered Institute of Fundraising

^[1] CAF UK Giving Report 2025: "Across all age groups, the main reason provided for not donating is affordability." [<https://www.cafonline.org/insights/research/uk-giving-report>]

^[2] The Commission on the Donor Experience: "Some of the best practitioners, authors and thinkers in the sector have all contributed to one aim: to transform the culture of fundraising to a truly donor-centric approach to raising money." [<https://sofii.org/cde/the-commission-on-the-donor-experience>]

The new Holy Grail for fundraisers

Ken Burnett reflects on donor loyalty and The Commission on the Donor Experience

"If giving is a rewarding, enjoyable experience, people will do more of it. If it isn't, they'll soon stop."

The Commission on the Donor Experience, 2017

Sometimes, if we're lucky, we get a second chance. This could be it. But this time, we must grasp it.

All charities aspire to cultivate legions of loyal supporters because they'll give more, stay giving longer, and many, in time, will leave a legacy. About Loyalty's research is evidence of this. And yet - our sector is haemorrhaging new donors. Far too few charities understand and are cultivating loyalty, and too few are even recruiting - far less properly servicing - regular committed donors.

Yet, for sure, we know what needs to be done.

Ten years ago, the UK's fundraising community was reeling from an

unprecedented flood of media attacks condemning inappropriate fundraising. Together with Giles Pegram CBE, we formed The Commission on the Donor Experience (CDE) in response, to rally concerned fundraisers everywhere to identify and share what best fundraising practice should look like.

More than 2,000 volunteers responded, and a uniquely valuable and massive body of work was defined and published^[1].

While much progress has been made, the hoped-for improvement in supporter experiences is still to come. And without excellent experiences for donors, sector-wide awareness of the CDE's recommendations, and a more

^[1] The Commission on the Donor Experience: "Some of the best practitioners, authors and thinkers in the sector have all contributed to one aim: to transform the culture of fundraising to a truly donor-centric approach to raising money." [<https://sofii.org/cde/the-commission-on-the-donor-experience>]

positive perception of fundraisers and fundraising in the general public, our sector simply cannot fulfil its potential.

This is a leadership issue, and we know how to put it right. Many practical services have blossomed since 2017, helping fundraising charities to prioritise and practice excellent supporter experience. And About Loyalty's research into supporter loyalty, proving the tangible connection between excellent experiences and long-term income, is no exception.

The 10th anniversary of CDE's findings gives all fundraisers a chance to show practical leadership: to ensure that everyone in our sector understands what happened then - and what needs to be done now - to avoid history repeating itself and to grow fundraising successfully.

Championing supporter experiences and building donor loyalty has to become the Holy Grail for all fundraisers. In 2015, fundraising in our

country hovered on the edge of collapse. In 2017, CDE's volunteers constructed a lifebelt, which has been corroborated still further by the findings in this report. As a sector, we need to revisit that lifebelt now, to make sure it floats and fix it where it doesn't. We may not get another chance.

The future of fundraising is delivering great supporter experiences. Please join us.



Ken Burnett
Co-founder, The Commission on the Donor Experience

"The CDE was a huge undertaking with an ambitious purpose: to find, curate, and share best practice in donor experience. At its peak, the initiative involved over 2,000 enthusiasts who contributed to more than 20 volunteer-led projects. I'll never forget the number 526: that's how many recommendations we ultimately delivered.

One of these recommendations shaped the foundations for everything we do at About Loyalty: that in order to improve the supporter experience, you must be able to measure it. After the Commission, Roger Lawson and I joined forces to create and deliver a simple, objective and practical tool for charities to measure and improve the supporter experience. This became: The Chase Index."

- Richard Spencer, Director, About Loyalty, and Director of The Commission on the Donor Experience

Part I: Research and insight

Part II: Insight into action

Part III: Next steps



2015 - 2025: 10 years of insight

Since 2015, we have worked closely with charities and nonprofits around the world to uncover what drives their supporter loyalty and long-term income. Here is what we have found:

2015

In our pilot research, we heard from 20,000 supporters of five charities.

Our analysis enabled us to create the first charity 'Loyalty Scores' and track these against the charities' retention rates. As the Loyalty Score went up, so did their supporter retention.

This was the first time anywhere in the world that anyone had proved the relationship between how people feel about you and how much they support, and in 2026 this is still the case.

2015 - 2018

Over the next three years, more charities measured their supporter loyalty.

We were able to validate that commitment, satisfaction and trust are the main drivers of loyalty, and that there is a clear relationship between a supporters' loyalty and their desire to give into the future.

The chart below shows the percentage of supporters who agreed, or strongly agreed, that they intend to continue supporting.

As the Loyalty Score increases, so does the percentage of supporters who intend to continue giving - proof of the connection between Loyalty and retention.



2018 - 2022

2022 was the culmination of tracking the loyalty and actual giving of 50,000 supporters from 12 charities over three years.

By now, we had tested over 20 different hypotheses around what creates loyalty and long-term giving. Each time confirmed that across all charities, **commitment, satisfaction and trust** are the most critical three.

Prior to this, we'd looked at what drives intention to support. But by tracking *actual* giving we were able to identify and quantify the causal relationship of growing loyalty on retention. **As loyalty increases, so does actual giving.**

We were able to quantify this increase using the Loyalty Score. On average, every 1-point increase in Loyalty led to the following over three years:



Access your copy of the full report, 'The definitive case for growing supporter loyalty', right here:



2023 - 2025

We were able to test more tailored drivers of loyalty with two large supporter bases, covering eight countries around the globe.



Image credits: Nigel Millard / Lorenzo Moscia

These studies, conducted with the RNLI and Greenpeace International, further validated that commitment, satisfaction and trust are the most important drivers for growing loyalty and support. You can read more in Part II of this report.

2026

Today, over 65 charities have measured their loyalty and identified their supporter experience strengths and weaknesses.

Whether it's in growing commitment, satisfaction or trust, these charities have action plans for improving their supporters' experiences, growing their retention and raising more money. And we continue to test and analyse to further improve our learning.

2015 - 2025: 10 years of insight

What is the best thing that someone could say about their experience with you as a supporter? And what about the worst?

The truth is: you'll never know until you ask.

We've had the privilege of working with charities of all sizes and causes: **health, animal welfare, international development, environment, children, disability, faith-based, emergency services**, and more.

Both **national giants** and **smaller, specialist organisations** are represented, meaning the reach of our research spans mass-market donors alongside more niche, highly engaged supporters.

The findings in this report are based on...

Surveys sent to millions of supporters across 74 charities in these sectors...

- Animal welfare
- Arts & culture
- Children or young people
- People living with disability
- Environment, conservation & heritage
- Elderly people
- Health support – i.e. support and information about illnesses or conditions
- Health research – i.e. medical research
- Homelessness and housing
- Local causes, or campaigns linked to a local area
- Local hospitals and hospices
- Military & armed forces
- Overseas aid and disaster relief
- Religious organisations (including churches, mosques and synagogues)
- Sport and recreation

...which have reached more than **60% of the UK giving population**^[1]



Quantitative evidence from over 500,000 supporters of those charities, giving in a variety of different ways - including...

Cash & Regular Gifts



Community Fundraising



Lottery & Raffle Giving



Events Sponsorship



...leading to over **40,000,000** collected data points.

So, what does all this insight tell us?
What makes a truly excellent supporter experience...?

^[1] Estimate based on surveys sent, average response rates and national giving statistics.

What makes an excellent supporter experience?

When someone supports your cause, they want to know that you are making a real difference to something they care about. They want to know that you value them and their involvement, and they want to know that you are being effective with their support and delivering on your promises.

Not all supporters are the same. Some give once and quietly disappear. Others stay with you for years, champion your cause, and even leave a gift in their will.

So what makes the difference? Why does one supporter stay loyal while another walks away?

Three things lie at the heart of lasting loyalty and long-term giving:

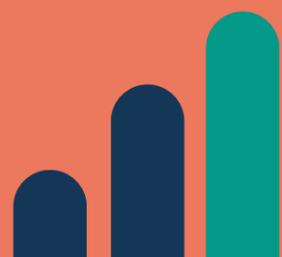


This is commitment, satisfaction, and trust: the passion they feel for your mission, the joy they find in giving, and the belief that you'll turn their support into real change.

In the pages ahead, we'll explore each of these – and bring them vividly to life.

"I love supporting anything that supports nature. It's so important."

Words from an environment charity supporter, explaining why their chosen charity is so important to them.



Commitment

Commitment is the beating heart of loyalty. **It's the strongest predictor of long-term giving, and even more so when it comes to gifts in wills.** But commitment isn't just about how often someone donates or how long they've supported you.

It's deeper than that – it's emotional... it's personal... it's powerful.

When we measure commitment, we're capturing something profound:

- How passionately a supporter feels about the goal your charity is working towards
- How deeply they value their relationship with your organisation
- How strongly they connect with the work you do, day in and day out

It's the moment a supporter sees your mission and feels a spark – *this matters to me.*

That spark becomes a flame – a feeling that they're not just giving but standing up for something they care about with their whole heart.

Commitment is all about **love**. Love of other people; love of animals; love of the world around us. It's the instinct to care, to protect, to nurture what matters most.

Commitment is all about **passion**. Passion to help others in need; passion to right a wrong; passion to stand up for what's fair and just. It's the fire that drives action, even when the odds feel stacked.

Commitment is all about shared **purpose**. A purpose that aligns with their deepest values; a purpose that gives their giving meaning; a purpose that connects their life to lasting change. It's the sense that their support is part of something bigger, and truly worthwhile.

Commitment is born in the heart, where stories awaken love, injustice stirs resolve, and the dream of a better world finds its voice in the act of giving. It's when supporters realise that they can do something about what they care most deeply about, and that you're the people to help them to do it.

What grows commitment?

Personal Connection

Sometimes, it's personal. When someone's own experience creates empathy, and a powerful desire to help others like them. And sometimes it's gratitude – when they, or someone they love, has been helped and giving becomes a way to say thank you and pass that kindness forward.

*"I care passionately as **I have [Condition] myself.**"*

*"I can't imagine how I'd cope **if I, or a member of my family were in the situation** in which we needed your support."*

Values

For some, commitment begins when a charity reflects their deepest values – when supporting you feels like standing up for what they believe in.

Faith

For many, giving is a way to live out their faith – to turn their belief into action, and compassion into change.

*"**I believe I have a duty** to support unfortunate animals. By supporting [Charity] I feel I am making a difference to these animals."*

*"I feel that **[Charity] shares my deep Christian values** so I feel comfortable giving from time to time."*

Identity

For others, giving reflects who they are. It's an expression of their identity, a way to shape the world in line with their ideals.

Hopes and Fears

Commitment can be driven by hope for a better future, or fear of what will happen if we don't act. Either way, it's what moves them to care.

*"As a **passionate environmentalist...** [Charity] gives me hope that we are making a difference turning the tide."*

*"[Condition] are devastating for the sufferer. **I really hope an all-out cure is found.**"*

Action from insight: growing commitment with Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex



Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) provide emergency support to millions of people across Kent, Surrey and Sussex. In 2023, whilst supporters were satisfied and showing trust in KSS, their commitment was lower, which provided a point of focus for targeted changes to their supporter experience:

- **Putting people at the heart of their messaging:** Their tone of voice is now simple, accessible and warm.
- **Handling enquiries at any point in the supporter journey:** Handy 'quick guides', produced by the Supporter Care team, empower more team members to meet supporters' needs for information.
- **Reducing supporter waiting times:** New call handling software has streamlined the communication process for supporter telephone calls.
- **Improved supporter communications:** Content and internal processes have been improved for mass supporter retention communications, including their monthly e-newsletter and bi-annual magazine.



Image credit: KSS

When KSS surveyed supporters again in 2024, their supporter commitment score had increased by 2% and their overall loyalty score increased by 1.9%.

"The Chase Index is an invaluable tool in guiding our focus and investment in supporter experience at KSS. It enables us to make changes that foster lasting trust, deeper connections and long-term loyalty among our supporters."



Victoria Friar
Head of Supporter Services
Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS)



Satisfaction

Satisfaction is created when your communications evoke positive emotions – giving supporters a sense of wellbeing, pride, happiness, and the deep feeling that they are seen, valued, and truly making a difference. You're helping supporters to enjoy the experience of interacting with your organisation, and feeling good about being a supporter.

Satisfaction is not just a transactional feeling – it's an emotional reward and the glow a supporter feels when their giving feels meaningful, appreciated, and impactful.

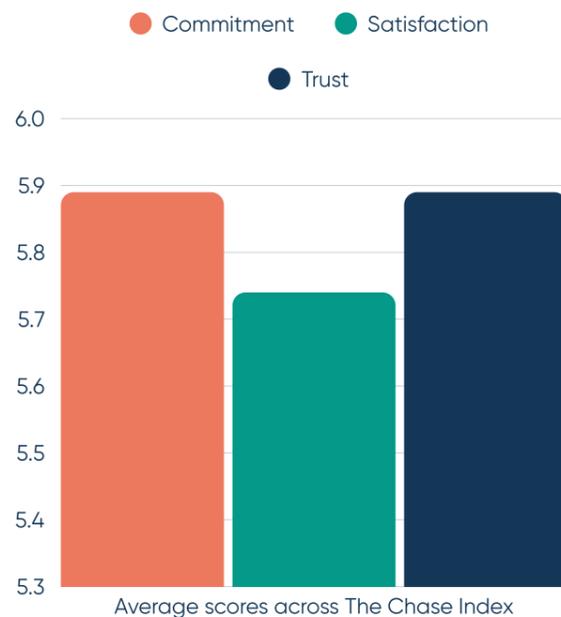
Charities create satisfaction through thoughtful communication. When they say thank you with warmth and sincerity. When they show the difference the supporter has made – not just in numbers, but in lives. When they reflect back the values that inspired the gift in the first place.

It's the joy of being seen and valued. Supporters feel satisfied when they're recognised not just as donors, but as partners in change. When they're reminded that their gift is part of a bigger story – and that they're central to it.

Supporters give to you despite, not because of, how you treat them

Our research has shown that, despite being the second most important driver after commitment, none of the charities we have surveyed ranked most highly for satisfaction when we looked at their most loyal supporters.

Coming second or third place every time, the topic of satisfaction should be an essential one for charity fundraisers. Every touchpoint is an opportunity for someone to feel more satisfied than before – but it's also an opportunity to get it wrong.



What grows satisfaction?

Celebrate what they've made possible.

Recognition isn't just about saying thank you, it's about showing supporters the real change they've helped create, and making them proud to be part of it.

"After completing [Challenge] I felt very appreciated by the charity. I received several emails thanking me for my fundraising."

"It always makes me feel I am making a difference to someone's life."

Share knowledge that deepens connection.

When you help supporters understand the issue, you don't just inform, you empower them to care more deeply.

Get the balance right.

Supporters feel valued when your communications don't just ask for more, but show what their past support has already achieved with warmth, clarity, and gratitude.

"They always give us any up to date information and appreciate our financial help!"

"I feel appreciated as a donor. I am made to feel that, no matter how small my donation, it helps."

Speak to the individual.

When you talk to supporters as people, not just donors, you build trust, connection, and a sense that they truly matter.

Show you understand why they give.

When your messages reflect their personal motivations, supporters feel seen. Then giving becomes an act of meaning, not just generosity.

"You even take the time to send a Christmas card, which myself and my wife think is a lovely gesture, and we're so proud to display [it] with all our family and friends' cards."

"By the reports and stories we get, I feel [Charity] realises why we give."

Words from charity supporters, explaining why their chosen charity is so important to them.



Trust

Trust is the belief that a charity will turn a supporter's generosity into meaningful change, and do so with integrity. It's not about proving you're frugal; it's about proving you're faithful to the cause, and to the people who care about it.

Trust is not about financial scrutiny – **it's about emotional assurance.** It's the quiet confidence a supporter feels when they believe a charity is

honouring their gift, staying true to its mission and making a real difference in the world.

This type of trust is built when supporters see their gift turned into real impact. When they recognise a charity that acts with integrity, stays true to its mission, and reflects the values they hold dear, they feel a deeper connection and a powerful desire to keep giving.

What grows trust?

Show the **impact** they've made.

Trust isn't built by stats: it's built by stories. When you share real stories of change, you show supporters that their gift has power, that your promises are kept, and that your mission is alive in the lives you touch.

These stories provide positive proof that you're creating the change that supporters care about. And it's this that builds trust and keeps it strong.

*"I have heard interviews with those who've benefited from your work – they speak movingly of **the difference your help made** to their lives."*

Act with **integrity**, always.

Supporters give with trust, and they need to feel that their trust is honoured in every decision you make. **Integrity isn't about perfection: it's about truthfulness, transparency, and doing what's right, even when it's hard.** When you communicate openly and act in the best interests of the cause, you show supporters that their gift is in safe, principled hands.

*"I feel that [Charity] has **consistently demonstrated integrity** in what they do and say. They stick to their mission."*



The financial impact of growing supporter loyalty at NDCS

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) has measured and tracked supporter loyalty since 2018. After six years of prioritising the supporter experience, they have seen a consistent increase in both their Loyalty score and in donations and legacies income: from £20,085,000 in 2019 to £28,462,000 in 2023.

Whilst there will be other factors at play here, the charts below illustrate the potential financial impact lying in the long-term investment of improving the experience for your donors when it's an integral part of your fundraising plan.

This investment is seen as part of a virtuous circle at NDCS, where a focus on high-quality supporter experiences increases supporter loyalty and leads to better fundraising results, growing internal confidence and more support for continuing with this approach in the future.



"Supporter experience is vital to long-term income. You need to look at the big picture of what donors care about, and the tiny details of how that comes to life. And most importantly, you need to measure the impact of what you're doing to improve it."



Chris Keating
Head of Individual Giving and Marketing
National Deaf Children's Society

Part I: Research and Insight

Part II: Insight into action

Part III: Next steps



“Whether tested against different statements or in different countries, the feelings of commitment, satisfaction and trust remained the most important indicators of a supporter’s intention to give again.”

Insight into **action:** charity case studies

When we first created the Loyalty score, it provided charities and non-profits with a universal measure of supporter experience based on the core loyalty drivers of commitment, satisfaction and trust.

This measure proved the relationship between financial support and how people feel about you, creating an irrefutable business case for investing in improving the supporter experience.

Ten years since its inception, would this still prove to be measuring what really matters?

You’re about to read about two major research projects which surveyed

supporters across the globe. **Both projects, whilst taking place completely independently, came to the same conclusion:** whether tested against different statements or in different countries, the feelings of commitment, satisfaction and trust remained the most important indicators of a supporter’s intention to give again.

You will also hear from two organisations who have already taken action to improve their supporter experience, based on insights from The Chase Index (page 52), and are now seeing the results.

- Pages 30- 33 **Asking the right questions: how the RNLI used audience insight to improve the supporter experience**
- Pages 34 - 37 **The people behind our people power: understanding the drivers of supporter engagement across the global Greenpeace network**
- Pages 38- 41 **Connecting the dots: embedding supporter experience into Mind’s organisational strategy**
- Pages 42 - 45 **Making shift happen: how donor retention and loyalty became everyone’s business at Sydney Children’s Hospitals Foundation**



Image credit: Leanne McColm / the RNLI

“By surveying supporters to see where their feelings were strongest, we could start to map out what an excellent supporter experience might look like for each of our supporters.”

Asking the right questions: how the **RNLI** used audience insight to improve the supporter experience



Carla Lord
Senior Experience Manager,
RNLI

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea. Its volunteers provide a 24-hour search and rescue service around the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland coasts. The RNLI operates 238 lifeboat stations in the UK and Ireland and more than 240 lifeguard units on beaches around the UK and Channel Islands.

In 2019 our Chief Fundraising and Communications Officer, Jayne George, rejoined the RNLI crew. Her return sparked the integration of our fundraising, marketing and media teams, and the creation of our current fundraising strategy which puts treating supporters brilliantly at its heart.

But to do this, we needed to understand what motivated people across the country to give – and continue giving – to the RNLI.

Measuring our experience

We partnered with About Loyalty, whose extensive research has identified the three most important feelings to measure as a sign of an excellent supporter experience: commitment, satisfaction and trust.

This research formed the foundation for our supporter experience survey, where we asked supporters to respond to 21 statements measuring their feelings of commitment, satisfaction and trust, alongside 70 bespoke statements of our own. The bespoke statements covered a wide spectrum: from donor attitudes and emotional connection to Lifeboats, to engagement with the sea and participation in watersports.

By surveying supporters to see where their feelings were strongest – and where there was room for improvement – we could start to map out what an excellent supporter experience might look like for each of our supporters.

Asking the right questions: how the RNLi used audience insight to improve the supporter experience



The strongest indicators of future giving for RNLi supporters, ranked in order of significance.

The findings were validating, and insightful: **we were able to demonstrate that commitment, satisfaction and trust are vital for loyalty at the RNLi**, and we have now anchored our communications around these elements.

This insight has helped to inform big strategic decisions, such as the direction of our comms strategy and language, but it's also helped us delve deeper into specific supporter groups and make more tangible changes.

For example, by listening to how our supporters referred to themselves in their responses, we have been able to change our language, meaning we now refer to them as 'family', not as 'crew'. This was a real wow moment for us, as 'crew' had been firmly

embedded in our external comms approach for many years.

We're also now reviewing the number of asks supporters receive, where they've shown sensitivity to this in the survey, and we've analysed where our scores were higher across certain supporter groups and explored which elements of their communications could be replicated elsewhere.

In our 201st year, the RNLi's strategic intent is to ensure we are set up for success: now and for the next 200 years, and counting. It's vital that the RNLi keeps abreast of how supporters feel about our cause, and how we treat them, so that we can move with changing supporter expectations and continue to grow - and tracking and measuring the supporter experience allows us to do that.

"We have now anchored our communications around these elements."

Image credit: Nigel Millard / the RNLi



"When we partnered with the RNLi, we had the rare opportunity to validate our framework for an excellent experience against a bespoke set of statements tailored specifically to their supporters, mission, and cause."

This became the largest test we've conducted with a charity to date, allowing us to assess a broad range of hypotheses in one place. We were able to learn what really matters for their supporters, and what is important in creating support.

This was a new project, with a new brief and a new process - and it reached the same conclusion as our own research. This is hugely significant, and presents exceptionally strong evidence that loyalty, commitment, satisfaction and trust are the first and most important things that any charity should be looking at."

- Richard Spencer, Director, About Loyalty

The people behind our people power

Understanding the drivers of supporter engagement across the global **Greenpeace** network



Joe White

Fundraising and Supporter Experience
Manager - Global Fundraising Department,
Greenpeace International



Greenpeace is a global network of campaigning National and Regional Organisations (NROs), known for the mission to use people power and non-violent direct action in pursuit of a green and peaceful planet.

At the heart of our network lies a commitment to those who share our vision – our supporters around the globe. Their relationship with us is central to our mission and is at the heart of the Framework which guides our strategy and approach:

“We will put people power at the heart of our work – strengthening, amplifying and working with those who share our vision, hope and belief that a better world is possible”

In an increasingly challenging landscape for recruitment, retaining every supporter has become crucial. Growing their lifetime value and maximising their impact on our work, therefore, is a top priority.

This led to Greenpeace launching the Drivers of Supporter Engagement pilot

project, with eight NROs collaborating together with Greenpeace International to help improve the experience being offered to Greenpeace supporters across the globe.

We wanted to create a more engaged audience who would stand with us, donate and be the people behind our “people power”, as we continue to campaign for a better world.

The Greenpeace Global Fundraising Strategy is anchored around the ambition of growing our net donor numbers and our net income. This project helps us deliver against both of these ambitions.

The process: gathering global insight

In 2024, we partnered with About Loyalty to design a pilot research study that would uncover our key drivers of supporter engagement. We wanted to understand, in depth, what motivates our donors: what creates long-term engagement and value and, therefore, what we should be embedding at the heart of our supporter experiences.

Eight NROs agreed to take part in this initial pilot of the research but we are hopeful to expand this project to include more NROs in the future.

We developed a range of hypotheses around why people give to Greenpeace in different countries, and what emotional connections will be core to each NRO’s long-term

engagement and loyalty. We included About Loyalty’s questions to understand levels of commitment, satisfaction and trust, but we also wanted to understand how important our supporters’ values and identity are. How do their climate-related goals and fears impact on their loyalty? And which emotions are most important for us to evoke in our communications?

This led to us testing over 100 questions across the surveys in this pilot aimed at understanding their support.

Action from insight

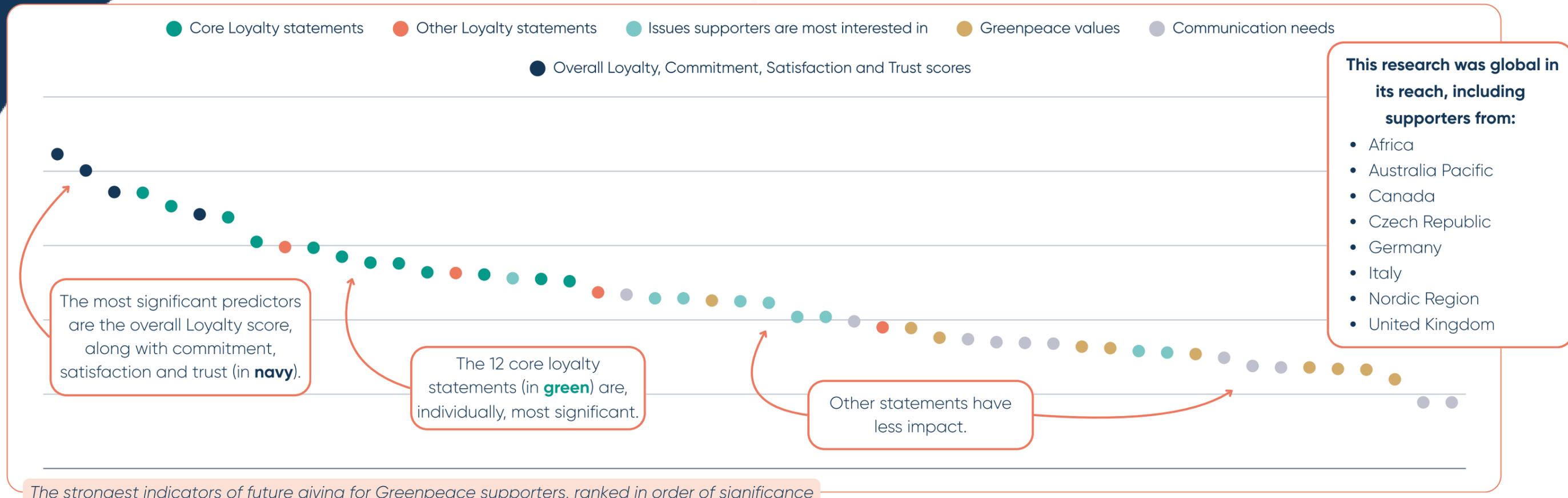
Our goal was to understand and measure the drivers of supporter engagement – to discover what was most important in creating value for our audience at Greenpeace.

The results spoke for themselves: we soon learnt that commitment, satisfaction and trust are the most significant drivers of support for us, as they are for other charities. And whilst the specifics varied, this overarching importance of commitment, satisfaction and trust was the case for every NRO in the study.



Image credit: Lorenzo Moscia / Greenpeace

The people behind our people power: understanding the drivers of supporter engagement across the global Greenpeace network



These findings highlighted what was working for each NRO, showed areas for improvement, and provided benchmarks to track their progress. It allows us to learn from offices which have different strengths and weaknesses, so we can support each other in testing ways to improve our loyalty scores.

Each NRO is now able to understand the drivers of loyalty for their audiences, and how this varies across different segments. Having a specific loyalty score for our supporters and for commitment, satisfaction and trust has enabled positive, strategic discussions in each NRO around the importance of investing in improving our supporter experience.

“Whilst the specifics varied, this overarching importance of commitment, satisfaction and trust was the case for every NRO in the study.”

It’s been really valuable for us to understand just how important growing supporter engagement and loyalty is for each Greenpeace NRO, and to make the case for investment in this across the global network.

The research has shown us where we need to invest to grow supporter commitment, satisfaction and trust and, perhaps even more importantly, how we can learn from each other to start doing this.

By testing, understanding and improving what matters most to our supporters, we can ensure their continued commitment to our cause, securing more donations and building our people power to create stronger

campaigns for a green and peaceful planet.

We now have a shared language for more detailed conversations about the importance of loyalty and its impact on income. It’s given us an important extra metric, with real substance behind it, which speaks to our organisational health that we can benchmark between offices and alongside other organisations in the outside world.

This project is already helping to inform the three-year fundraising planning cycles of a number of NROs, and we are excited to roll it out further.

Connecting the dots: embedding supporter experience into Mind's organisational strategy



Katie Mitchell
Head of Supporter Engagement,
Mind



At Mind, we're fighting for a future where no mind is left behind. Through our information, services and campaigns we tackle stigma, barriers and isolation so that everyone can access mental health support when they need it.

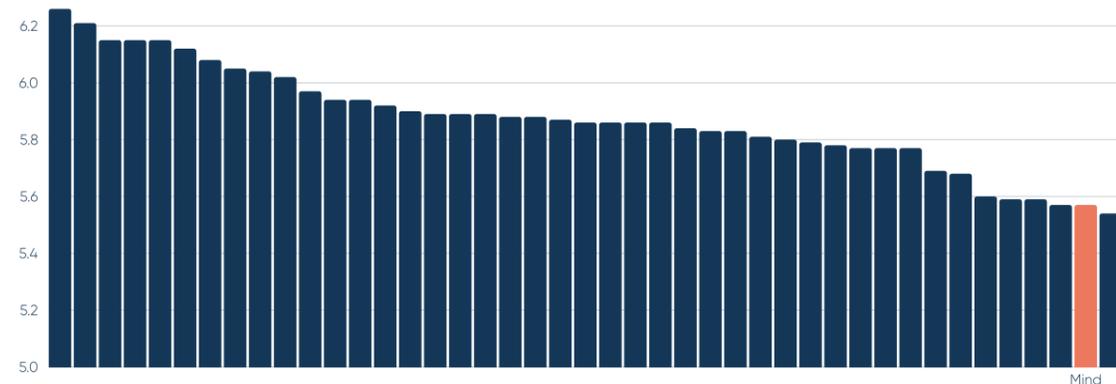
Since 2020, we've asked Mind supporters about their experience four times. Each time it has shone a light on where supporters were happy – and where there is room for improvement.

In 2022, our supporters expressed that they felt passionately about our work and goals, but were also telling us

that they weren't satisfied with their experience as a donor and didn't have high levels of trust in us.

We knew we needed to do something about this. We didn't want people to feel let down by Mind, and we also knew that poor supporter experience could be really damaging to our reputation and our financial future.

Mind cannot deliver on creating a mentally healthy society without bringing together a movement of people to campaign and fundraise, and our future just wasn't sustainable if we didn't nurture the loyalty of Mind's supporters.



Low trust score: Mind ranked 43rd out of 44 charities for supporter trust in The Chase Index in 2022

The journey

In 2022, our supporters scored most highly for commitment – people cared passionately about Mind's mission – but they scored less highly across satisfaction and trust.

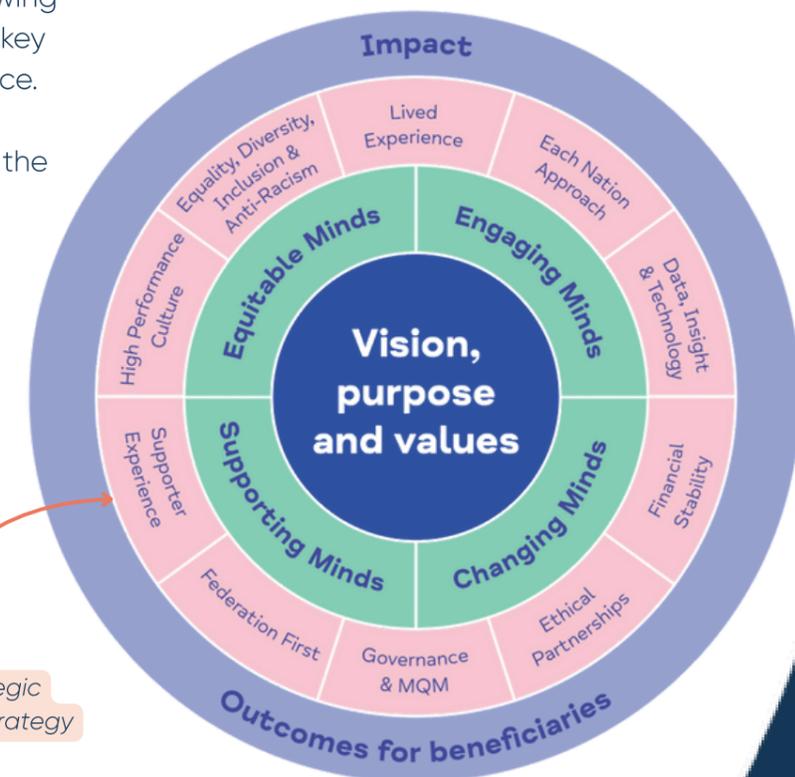
Our Chase Index results showed that we needed to focus on demonstrating impact to beneficiaries, and showing gratitude as an organisation, as key drivers to improving the experience.

The results of the survey gave us the data we needed to highlight this issue to Mind's leadership team and recommend a strategy for change.

It was scary to share bad results, but Mind's leaders were really keen not to let supporters down;

they really cared about how people were feeling when they supported Mind.

We were in the process of refreshing the organisational strategy, so in 2023, "supporter experience" was named as a strategic enabler in our organisation-wide strategy (see below).



Supporter experience is a strategic enabler in Mind's organisational strategy

"Our future just wasn't sustainable if we didn't nurture the loyalty of Mind's supporters."

Action from insight

Our new supporter experience strategy was specific about the changes that needed to be made, focussing on areas where we were underperforming: demonstrating impact on beneficiaries, and appropriately thanking people for their support. With buy-in secured, the focus of our strategy was clear:

Increased personalisation and impact of thanking: running a Thankathon, reviewing and updating thank you letters across all teams.

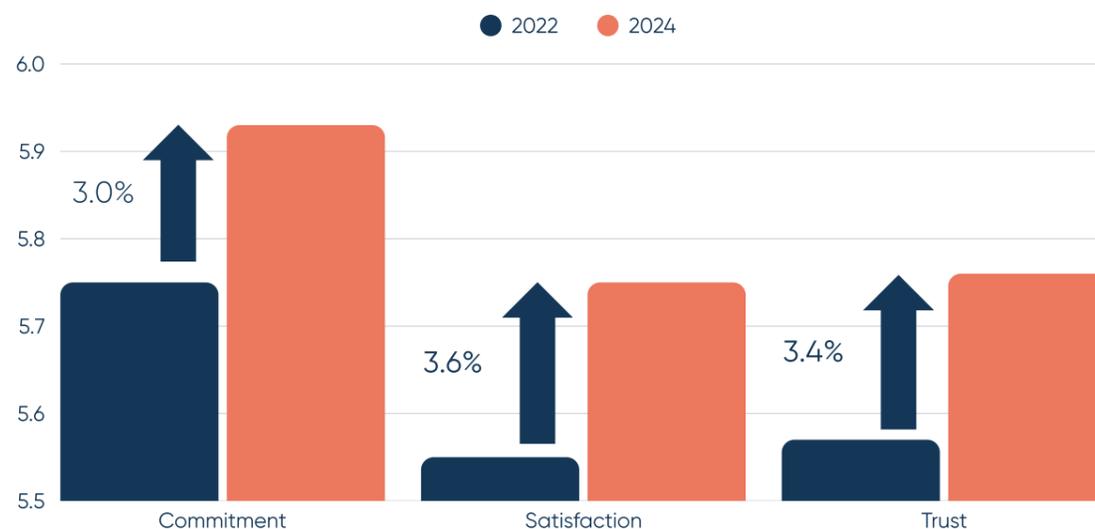
Measuring supporter experience consistently across all product journeys: using The Chase Index survey alongside an in-house method of surveying supporter satisfaction across product journeys.

Delivering impact and story-telling content that focusses on mental health 'moments': this content is now built into our product journeys and onward stewardship through our email channel.

Testing cross-sell initiatives: for example, by including new audience segments in warm marketing.

By identifying these specific actions to improve the experience, and by aligning the supporter experience strategy with the organisation's strategic objectives, we've already grown supporter satisfaction by 3.6% and supporter trust by 3.4%.

This means that, for every £1 spent on the most recent survey, we can estimate £24 in additional income.



On the move: Mind improved their supporter loyalty scores from 2022 to 2024 by investing in their supporter experience.



"For every £1 spent on the most recent survey, we can estimate £24 in additional income."

What's next?

Our planned improvements to the supporter experience are built into our targets for income growth and although we've made good progress against our strategy there's still lots to do.

We still want to improve how we show gratitude. We want to listen to supporters more effectively, and be able to personalise how we communicate and what we offer. We also want to do more to ensure that what supporters are seeing and hearing from us reflects what's happening in the news, their experience of mental health, and how they are making a difference.

Ultimately, Mind cannot mobilise support to address the mental health crisis if people do not trust that we'll deliver on the change we've promised. This means that delivering a great supporter experience is crucial to the organisation's reputation and future financial sustainability.

"Mind's success is a great example of using real insights from supporters to develop a targeted approach to improving the experience. But more than that. It shows that when your senior leadership team is as committed to offering excellent supporter experiences as you are, then the magic of improved loyalty and long-term income growth can really come to life."

- Roger Lawson, Founder and Director, About Loyalty

Making shift happen: how donor retention and loyalty became everyone's business at Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation



Tess O'Sullivan
Head of Individual Giving,
Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation



Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation (SCHF) exists to help provide access to the best possible healthcare for children, whenever and wherever they need it.

Since 2018, we have supported five separate entities across the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network. As a united team with one mission, we must deeply connect our donors with SCHF, whilst honouring their commitment to each of our individual hospital entities.

These people often believed in our mission enough to give once, but something was missing that kept them from staying.

When we looked closer, the reason was clear: our supporter experience was transactional. It lacked warmth, personalisation and meaningful engagement – and when we measured the supporter experience with About Loyalty in 2023, our ranking was almost at the bottom of The Chase Index.

For many people, their journey with us was a one-and-done experience, with nothing but silence after the receipt of their gift. So, if we wanted to turn donors into lifelong supporters, we knew that we needed to shift from transactions to relationships – from passive communication to genuine engagement.

Once we had identified the problem and mapped out our strategy, it was time to get to work. Turn over for three of the key changes we've made to our supporter experience since beginning this project:

"If we wanted to turn donors into lifelong supporters, we needed to shift from transactions to relationships – from passive communication to genuine engagement."

"Supporter retention for Individual Giving has climbed from 39.7% in 2021 to 54.0% in 2025."

What we've learned

We started this journey trying to solve our Individual Giving team's biggest pain point. What we ended up with was a blueprint for how to build better relationships, a stronger organisational culture and more long-term impact by focusing on supporter commitment, satisfaction and trust.

1) Personalisation isn't just a nice-to-have. It's transformational.

When donors felt seen, heard, and valued, their satisfaction skyrocketed – and so did their giving. Simple acts, like a thank-you call or a personalised third-gift journey, had outsized impact. But remember – the donor experience isn't just what you send, it's how it makes them feel.

2) Establish engagement, retention or loyalty as key organisational metrics.

You can't fix what you can't see. Tracking metrics like supporter loyalty, with scores in satisfaction, trust, and commitment, gave us a new lens and a new level of accountability. And partnering with About Loyalty helped us go beyond anecdotal feedback and gut feelings. From this, we gained quantifiable insights that shaped our strategy and validated our decisions when making this shift happen.

3) Adopt a test-and-learn mindset.

We didn't wait for perfection. We launched, learned, adjusted – and got better with every iteration. If you don't have organisational buy-in to radically change your whole way of working, we found it valuable to use early or case-based wins to build your case before gaining wider support from other teams.

Retention isn't about one lucky moment; it's about staying engaged and committed. There is no linear process – it's not a single activity, journey or metric. It's about well we consistently honour the wonderful supporters who believe in our mission.

1) We designed an automated welcome journey that introduced donors to our mission, showed them their impact, and kept them engaged.

To encourage that all-important second gift from new cash donors, we introduced a quiz at the start of the journey which helped us to understand what motivated our supporters. The answers split our audience into three groups – meaning that we can now send impactful communications to these groups that are crafted to align with their underlying motivations.

2) For donors who made a second gift during the Welcome period, we flagged them for a personal call or email just to say 'thank you'.

Those calls revealed that most people were giving because they had a personal connection or were supporting a friend's fundraiser, which provided valuable insight for our peer-to-peer fundraising team to personalise their experience even further.

3) Lastly, we introduced an optional 'thank you' gift at the third donation mark.

Our research showed that this moment in the supporter journey was a critical indicator for future retention. We provided an optional choice between a magnet, a notepad, or a pen, all branded with a message of gratitude.



Image credit: SCHF

The results

From starting this project in 2021, by 2024 our personalised, donor-centric approach was already showing results across Individual Giving:

- The median gift has grown by AUD \$17.80 (approximately £8.60).
- Average gift size has increased by nearly AUD \$20 (approximately £9.70)
- More people are reaching the third gift milestone – up from 9.0% to 9.7%.

In particular, the first phase of the thank you calling initiative has had a huge impact, bringing in 185 donations worth AUD \$115,000 (around £56,000) and reactivating 37 Regular Givers.

Lastly, and most importantly for us, supporter retention for Individual Giving has climbed from 39.7% in 2021 to 54.0% in 2025.

Part I: Research and Insight

Part II: Insight into action

Part III: Next steps



Your **next steps** to an excellent experience

It's easy to think of the supporter experience as something for front-line fundraisers only. But they can't do this without:

- your **programmes and services colleagues** providing the stories of need and impact...
- your **HR team** creating a culture that empowers all staff to talk passionately about what you do...
- your **communications team** driving the story-telling of the change you're making in the world...
- your **planning processes** identifying and prioritising the budgets (both time and resources) to put this into action...
- your **finance team** showing where donors' money has been spent...
- and, perhaps most importantly of all, your **leadership team** championing the vital role of supporters for you to achieve your mission.
- your **IT team** providing the systems and processes for capturing and using supporter data and insight...

It's the role of everyone in the organisation to deliver excellent supporter experiences. Turn the page for some ideas to help you on your journey to becoming a supporter-centred organisation...

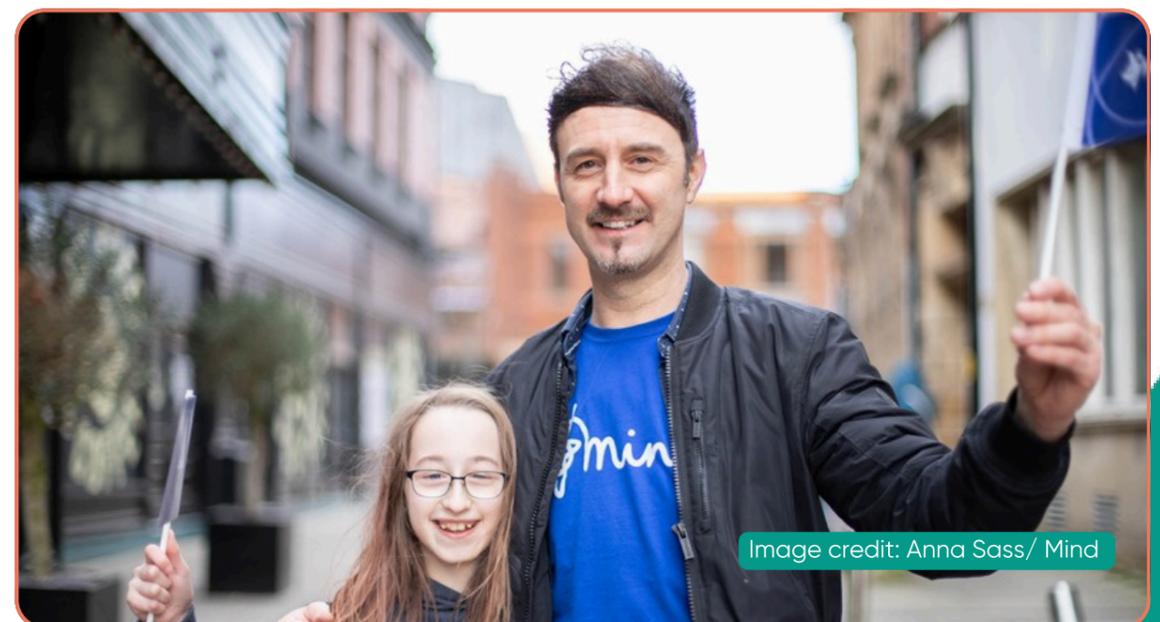


Image credit: Anna Sass/ Mind

Your next steps to an excellent experience

For the fundraisers...

Be the voice of your supporters.

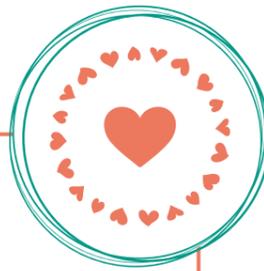
You hold the key to bringing a supporter's perspective to life, especially for colleagues who aren't as closely connected as you. Record those authentic conversations you're having, on the phone or in your inbox, and seize any opportunity to share what your supporters are really thinking and feeling.

Show your gratitude!

Inspire supporters with your shared vision, reassure them that they've done the right thing, and build some pride for what you've achieved together. Get creative, do something out of the ordinary – a truly memorable and magical 'thank you' makes a real difference.

Connect with like-minded people across the sector.

There really is strength in numbers. Whether it's a formal working group, a Teams or Slack channel, or a community of charities like The Chase Index, find a way to bring people together who really 'get it' – it will help you to share ideas and drive forwards more supporter-centred activities.



For the finance team...

Reframe your ROI.

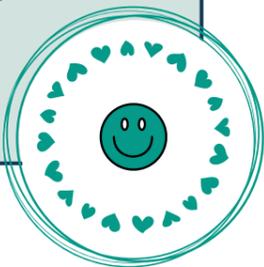
Don't just measure acquisition cost vs income – consider the potential uplift in audience lifetime value from growing loyalty. Look at the 3 – 5 year income arc. Investing in supporter experience improve can your revenue and risk resilience – now *that's* strategic finance.

Insist on a supporter experience measure.

Just as all charities track income KPIs, reserves, and donor attrition, imagine a world where every report begins with a measure of supporter loyalty, satisfaction, or sentiment. If you don't have a measure yet – demand one.

Embed supporter experience into planning.

Ask the right questions of your plans for the future. *"How will this project impact loyalty?" "Will it deepen connection, improve retention or increase churn?" "Are we funding supporter experience like we fund recruitment?"* This is your opportunity to champion supporter experience where it really matters: in the long-term plans for the organisation.



For the campaigners and marketers...

Reflect their reason(s) for supporting in your content.

Your supporters want to know that you're on the same page and working towards the same goals. Your content should resonate with supporters on a personal level, and fire up those feelings of commitment and loyalty.

Bring supporter experience into every brief.

Consider what might change if all of your campaigns and content were designed with the key drivers of loyalty in mind: *"Will this strengthen commitment?" "Will it encourage satisfaction?" "Will it build trust?"* Suddenly, the experience is no longer an afterthought: it's at the heart of everything you create.

Show the emotional impact of your work.

You are the eyes and ears of your supporters: through you, they experience the world that their donations make possible. You can bring this to life with high-quality, relevant content – blogs, videos, social media and print – as a constant reminder to supporters that you keep your promises and you can be trusted.



For the senior leaders...

Prioritise the experience for everyone.

Supporter experience belongs to everyone, and you're in the position to make this a reality. Where are the moments that bring your organisation together in the year – and how can you bring the supporter's perspective into these?

Make time for your supporters.

Whether it's a thank you call, a celebratory dinner or something different, consider how you can show up for the people who support your work as a senior leader. Make space in your diary to hear their stories and their reasons for giving.

Get the trustees on board.

Trustees may not be at the forefront of your supporter experience, but you can bring the experience to them. Look for opportunities to introduce the voice of the supporter: you could share how supporters feel in their own words at your next meeting, or include your results from The Chase Index in your regular reporting.



How does it work?

What is The Chase Index?

We've referred to The Chase Index throughout this report. It provides **one clear measure for how your supporters feel about you**, based on research from more than 500,000 charity and non-profit supporters across the globe.

With tailored insights and data-driven decisions guiding your supporter experience planning, you can grow an audience of loyal supporters - people who love what you do, and why you do it.

The result? Loyal supporters, giving more and giving for longer. Which leads to more income, more impact, and more positive change in the world.

Why should I join?



It's simple. Uncover your supporter experience strengths, identify the most valuable opportunities to improve, and take steps to get there.



It's fast. You could be tracking the quality of your supporter experience in as little as three weeks. All you need is a transaction file.



It's industry standard. Our framework is grounded in robust insight from 60+ charities, 500,000 supporters and ten years of research.

Discover what drives your donors.

Hear from your supporters and measure your loyalty with our tried-and-tested framework, using 12 core statements and your own bespoke questions.

Access insights, compare performance, and explore audience segments - all in one powerful online portal.



Take action from insight.

Uncover your supporter experience strengths and identify the most valuable opportunities to improve. We'll support you to make data-driven decisions, improve your supporter experience and unlock your full fundraising potential.



Benchmark your progress.

From monthly member workshops to bespoke advice and guidance, join our thriving community of charities and non-profits who know *exactly* how good their supporter experience is and where they are successfully improving it (growing income).

"I have taken so many lessons from each member workshop that I hadn't found from other sources, and thoroughly enjoyed each session too. It's a great format and I'm really happy we've come onboard with you!"
Matthew Bolger, Tŷ Hafan Children's Hospice

“Loyalty metrics don’t just reflect the past: they predict the future. They give us time to act before supporters walk away.”

Ten years of **Loyalty**: from firsts to the future



Roger Lawson
Founder & Director,
About Loyalty

It’s been ten years since About Loyalty ran its first pilot study asking not just what drives donor loyalty, but why it matters.

That pilot marked a global first: the first scientific evidence that giving supporters a great experience and nurturing emotional loyalty leads to stronger retention, deeper commitment and a greater intention to leave gifts in wills.

Since then, we’ve been proud to lead a series of sector-shaping firsts. We were the first to prove that loyalty is driven by commitment, satisfaction, and trust. The first to show that growing loyalty leads to actual income growth: 20% more in just three years. And the first to quantify its impact on legacy giving, with a 9% uplift in someone’s intention to leave a gift in a will.

These aren’t just milestones: these moments changed the conversation. For years, fundraisers believed in the power of supporter experience, but lacked the evidence to act. Now, we

have the data to engage not just fundraisers, but finance directors, CEOs and boards. And we have the framework to guide strategy, to focus effort and to unlock change.

The sector has evolved. In 2015, a LinkedIn search for “donor loyalty” returned just two jobs. Today, it returns over 400. The Commission on the Donor Experience helped to map best practice. And now, over 60 charities have a tangible measure of their supporter experience.

This matters... because what we measure shapes what we do. When we track giving and retention, we track what has already happened. If a supporter has stopped giving, it is already too late.

But Loyalty metrics don’t just reflect the past: they predict the future. They give us time to act before supporters walk away. They help us to grow income *and* impact, hand-in-hand.

Thank you for reading this report. It’s never been more urgent to measure how your supporters feel. And it’s never been more important to put growing loyalty at the heart of your communications, your strategy, and your story.

You're amazing!

Our sector is stronger when we learn from each other. To each and every person who shared their expertise and experience in the building of this report – you are our guiding stars and the reason why we are here. You are truly amazing.

- **Carla Lord**, Senior Experience Manager, the RNLI
- **Chris Keating**, Head of Individual Giving and Marketing, National Deaf Children's Society
- **Harpreet Kondel**, Chair, Chartered Institute of Fundraising
- **Joe White**, Fundraising and Supporter Experience Manager – Global Fundraising Department, Greenpeace International
- **Katie Mitchell**, Head of Supporter Engagement, Mind
- **Ken Burnett**, Co-Founder, The Commission on the Donor Experience
- **Sabine Courtice**, Research Officer, the RNLI
- **Tanya Sarina**, Director of Donor Experience, Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation
- **Tess O'Sullivan**, Head of Individual Giving, Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation
- **Timothy Talty**, Head of Donor and Patient Engagement, Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation
- **Victoria Friar**, Head of Supporter Services, Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex
- **You!** For reading this report and for everything you do to centre the supporter experience at your organisation.

And to everyone we've worked with, from 2015 to 2025, and all our wonderful members of The Chase Index. The future of supporter experience is shaped by you.



We're About Loyalty

We are a dedicated supporter experience agency helping you translate supporter insights into sustainable income growth.

We help you develop accurate insights into your supporters, using our science-based methodology to measure what really matters for great experiences and successful fundraising – **Loyalty**.

Get ready to understand and drive results from the connection between loyalty and long-term income growth, as our research shows that more loyal supporters lead to:

- 20% more income
- 15% more donors continuing to give
- 9% more pledges for gifts in wills

Charities that grow loyalty, grow income. It's that simple.

Our support is flexible and tailored to your needs, from full survey delivery and analysis to ongoing strategic guidance.

Do you want to...

- Uncover specific actions to deliver the **biggest income growth** for your organisation?
- Identify **hidden opportunities** within your supporter base to increase retention and legacy giving?
- Benchmark your financial potential, against a **global community** of charities, using our proven metrics?

Then let's talk about how we can grow your income together.

Drop Richard a message, or scan the QR code below.



Richard Spencer
Richard@About-Loyalty.com
07703 483 220

