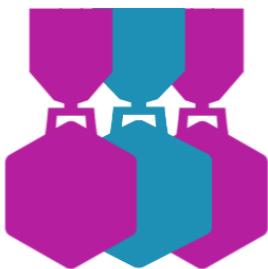
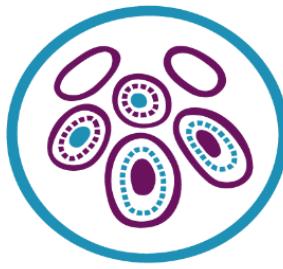


Facts and Figures: Public's Favourite Causes



17% of people name UK armed forces as their favourite cause



Cancer is one of the favourite causes for 47% of the public



Sport/exercise-related causes attract more than half of all volunteers

Key facts

- **46%** of the UK public name **Cancer** as one of their favourite causes -more than any other cause.
- The cause that attracts the largest proportion of **individual donations** is **medical research (33%)**.
- **Religious causes (14%)** receive the largest share of donations in terms of **total monetary value**.
- **Animal charities** receive only **7% of individual donations** despite being named as a favourite cause by **33%** of the UK public.
- The cause that attracts the most volunteers is **sport/exercise** (53% of all volunteers).
- **17%** of people name **UK armed forces** as a favourite cause, up from **2%** in 2010.

More detail on all of these in the next few pages

December 2015

Introduction

There are over 160,000 charities in the UK¹, benefiting a wide range of causes from hospices to international development. We explore facts and figures to try and determine which of these causes appeal most to the general public, but find that the outcome depends on the criteria used. When asked, the public name clear favourites such as cancer and animals, but when their donating and volunteering preferences are considered the picture is far from clear.

According to the public, cancer, animals and children and young people are their favourite causes

This July, around half (46%) of the public selected cancer as one of the categories that their favourite charities fall into and around a third selected both animals (36%) and children and young people (32%)². From chart 1 we can see that other popular causes included hospices and health and medical charities, while sensory impairment was the least favourite cause.

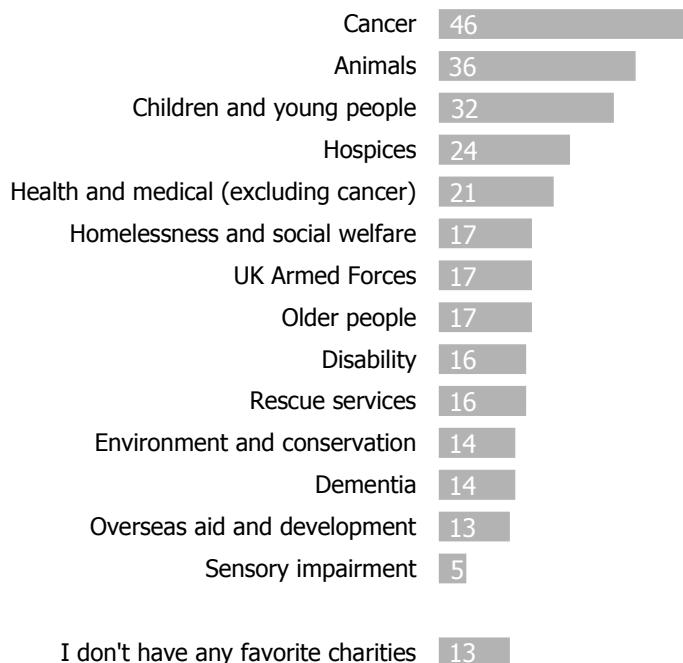


Chart 1: "When you think about your favourite charities, which category do they fall into? " (%) (respondents were able to select multiple categories)²

The public's favourite causes have changed very little over the last five years – in fact, **the top five causes have stayed the same** during this period. In July 2010, cancer was still the public's favourite cause (53%), although animals (32% in 2010) has since leapfrogged children and young people (39% in 2010) to become the second favourite cause³. However, one cause has become considerably more popular during this time - **the proportion of people naming armed forces among their favourite causes has risen** from 2% in 2010³ to 17% in 2015².

According to our 2015 data, **a person's gender has little effect on their choices of favourite causes**. Both male and female respondents picked the same top three favourite causes (cancer, animals, children and young people)². However, it seems that women are far more likely than men to favour animal charities. 41% of female respondents name animals as one of their favourite causes, whereas the same figure for males was just 30%². There are also **differences between active religious worshippers and non-worshippers**. Far more worshippers named children and young people (40%), homelessness and social welfare (26%) and disability (24%) as favourite causes than non-worshippers (30%, 15% and 13% respectively)².

Different age groups favour different causes

A person's **age appears to be a highly influential factor** in determining their favourite causes. Whilst animals and children and young people are the second or third most popular causes for all age groups 16-54, over 65s name hospices (36%) and rescue services (30%) as their favourite causes after cancer (51%), which tops the list for all age groups².

The most pronounced differences are found between the youngest and eldest in our survey. More 16-24 year olds list children and young people as a favourite cause (32%) than any other age group, whereas over 65s (25%) favour it the least². Similarly, only 14% of 16-24 year olds list older people as a favourite cause, whereas the same figure for over 65s stands at 24%².

The public don't necessarily donate more to their favourite causes

The cause that attracts the **largest proportion of individual donations** is medical research (33%), followed by children (30%) and hospitals (25%)⁴. This largely supports our data on what the public say are their favourite causes. However, there are some outliers – alarmingly, animal charities receive only 7% of donations⁴, despite being named as a favourite cause by 33% of people². By contrast, overseas development receives 20% of donations⁴, despite only 13% of people naming it as their favourite cause². This suggests that the Overseas development sector markets itself extremely effectively.

If we determine the public's favourite cause by share of donations in terms of **total monetary value**, a different picture emerges. Despite receiving only 12% of donations, the cause that receives that largest share of donations by this measure is 'religious causes' (14%)⁴. This is because the average donation to this cause is £20, which is much higher than the overall average (£14)⁴. By comparison, although they receive around a third of individual donations, medical charities receive only 13% of the total amount donated to charity⁴.

Sport and recreational causes attract the most volunteers

The cause that attracts the most volunteers is sport/exercise – 53% of those who volunteered at least once in 2014 chose to support a sport/exercise-related cause. This is despite sport/exercise not appearing in the top 10 of the public's self-professed favourite causes². Similarly, this cause attracts only 4% of individual donations, and 1% of donations in terms of total monetary value⁴. The second most popular cause by this measure is hobbies/recreation/arts/social clubs (38%), and the third is religion (33%)⁵, neither of which make an appearance on our list². This shows that there is a clear distinction between what the public believe to be their favourite causes, and the causes to which they are more willing to give their time.

nfpSynergy is a research consultancy that delivers the research, the insights and the expertise to help non-profits understand their audiences and make informed strategic decisions. Our Charity Awareness Monitor (CAM) enables charities to find out how they are perceived by the most vital of audiences; the general public. It also gives an insight into what the public think about volunteering, campaigning and donating to charity, whilst providing an accurate benchmark for charities to measure themselves against.

For more details, please email our team at CAM@nfpSynergy.net, or call on 020 7426 8888.

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