



Resource—1 Side—1
www.g-nation.co.uk



1—What is charity?

People have always helped each other out, probably for as long as there have been human beings on the planet. Today, in spite of all the attempts to make it a better and fairer place, the world is still a long way from being perfect and most people still feel a need to be charitable: showing kindness not just to their friends but to people they don't know and maybe will never even meet.

You may be used to helping out friends – lending an ear, sharing your money or giving them your time – but what about helping people you don't know? That's more difficult. And that's where charities come in.

A charity is an organisation. Usually, its purpose is to enable one group of people to help another, though it could also be to benefit animals or protect the environment. Many of the best-known charities were set up by people who felt passionately that something was wrong and had to be put right or prevented.

In the UK, it's easy to set up a charity – and there are already 190,000 or so. How they respond to the need they are tackling is largely up to them. The money they raise has to be used sensibly and honestly to help the cause it was raised for, but otherwise there are very few rules.

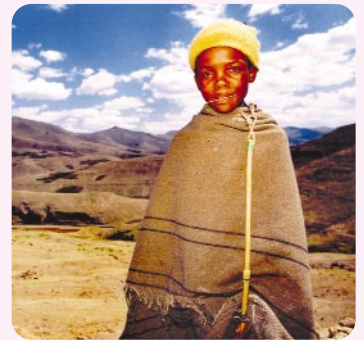
One thing that is required of charities is that they benefit the public in some way. You can't set up a charity to help just one individual (eg to raise the money to treat a particular child who is ill), however good a cause it may be.

Here are some causes that charities work for:

- Helping people who are poor
- Helping people who have been neglected or abused
- Helping the victims of natural disasters
- Protecting or improving the environment
- Helping communities in isolated or deprived areas
- Fighting prejudice and promoting diversity
- Supporting people who are ill or have disabilities
- Looking after sick or unwanted animals
- Promoting education
- Helping people to enjoy sport or the arts

And here are some ways in which they can help:

- Speaking up for people
- Providing care that no one else provides
- Raising awareness
- Campaigning for change
- Researching treatments and cures for serious illnesses
- Helping people to change their lives for the better (eg drug addicts or ex-offenders)
- Raising money
- Organising volunteers



- Bringing people together
- Building facilities to meet a need, like a drop-in centre for homeless people

No matter what age you are, you can help to shape the world the way you want by helping a charity in its work.

Giving Nation shows you how people give their time, their money and the benefit of their skills to make a difference. We also show you how many people are already involved – you may be surprised! People say that helping in this way makes them feel good about life (though not everyone agrees). Where do you fit in?



Keeping charities trustworthy

Charities in England and Wales are monitored by the Charity Commission. (In Scotland the same role is played by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and in Northern Ireland by the Inland Revenue.)

The Charity Commission is a government organisation that does not have a politician in charge, so it is able to make its own decisions about charities. Its job is to make sure that charities do what they say they will do in the best way possible, so that the public can trust them. It also offers advice and guidance to charities to help them in their work.



2—What do people your age think about charity?

Every year, Giving Nation does a survey of people aged 11–16 to find out what they think about charity.

Look at our research and you'll see that most people your age are very positive about giving and helping – but are not sure if their friends are.

This research was mostly concerned with giving money, but 'charitable giving' can mean more than giving money. Here are some other ways people behave charitably:

— Spending time and energy to help out – eg by going to the shops for someone

— Giving someone the benefit of their skills or talents

— Adding their voice – eg by signing a petition or going on a

march, or by writing letters on behalf of someone who can't speak for themselves

— Raising money – eg by doing a sponsored walk or a street collection

— Giving blood is another way of helping, though this isn't done through a charity.

Our society has been shaped by people who set up charities in order to create a better and fairer world. Do you feel so strongly about any cause that you would give money or time to it, even if it meant going without something yourself? If so, what is it?

Invisible giving?

Our research shows that the number of young people who see their parents giving money to charity has gone down, year by year, for the last three years – and yet the total amount being given to charity has not gone down. So, why are you seeing less being given?

We think it's because more and more people are making their gifts by Direct Debit – a system that transfers money directly from one bank account to another at regular intervals. This is now one of the commonest ways of giving, but this way you don't see any money changing hands. Do you know anyone who gives in this way?

Some useful websites

- www.charitychoice.co.uk – 'the encyclopaedia of charities on the internet'
- www.charityportal.org.uk – a searchable online database of UK charities...
- www.smartchange.org – ...and another one
- www.givenow.org – 'the place for you to give'
- www.rememberacharity.org.uk – how to remember a charity in a will

'Giving money to charity is a good thing' –

81%

'I feel good when I've given money to charity' –

71%

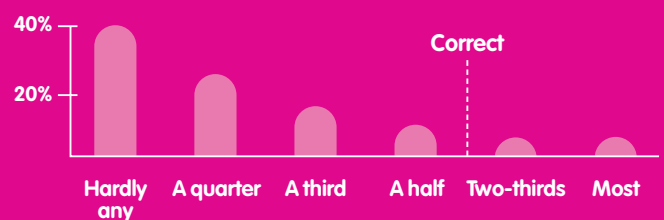
'I gave money to charity the last time I was asked' –

73%

'I've given time or money to charity in the last six months' –

58%

How many people of your age do you think have given money to charity in the past six months?



Most young people seriously underestimate how generous their friends are. Why do you think that is?

Young People and Charitable Giving – GN/NOP research 2004

Did you know?

Two-thirds of the population regularly give to charity, and the average gift is £12 a month.