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**15 May 2023**

**Support a charity to feel more optimistic, new report from Benefact Group finds**

* **People who volunteer and donate to charity are almost twice as likely to feel more optimistic, according to findings**
* **Volunteers also feel closer to others and more relaxed**
* **The Benefact Group’s Value of Giving report also finds charity supporters report higher levels of life satisfaction**

**People who volunteer and donate to charity are almost twice as likely to feel more optimistic, according to new research.**

Research and econometric analysis from the UK’s third-largest corporate donor, Benefact Group, has revealed a direct link between charitable giving and positive mental health outcomes.

The *Value of Giving 2022 Report1* reveals people who donate and volunteer view their own lives more positively, which has a knock-on effect on mental health.

**Mental health benefits**

A third (33.8%) of adults who donate feel “optimistic” about the future, compared to 28.2% of those who don’t. Similarly, three quarters (74.1%) of donors say they feel “close to others”, compared to 65.4% of non-donors.

Volunteers are more “optimistic” about the future, as 45.2% report this emotion compared to just 28.2% of those who don’t volunteer. Those that volunteer feel more “relaxed”, with 58.1% of volunteers reporting this emotion compared to 48.2% of those who don’t volunteer. Seven-in-ten (70.8%) volunteers say they feel “useful”, compared to two-thirds (66.1%) of non-volunteers.

People that both donate and volunteer report more positive emotions than those who do neither. Those who do both are 1.7 times more likely to feel “optimistic” about the future2. This is followed by feeling “close to others”, which is felt by 74.6% of those who donate and volunteer, compared to the 64.5% among those who do neither.

**Life satisfaction**

The research also found that volunteering for nine hours provides the same increase in life satisfaction as earning an additional £1,000 per month. Furthermore, it discovered that giving £231 to charitable causes in a 12-month period increases satisfaction by a similar level.

The research, commissioned by Benefact Group and conducted by the Centre of Economics and Business Research (Cebr), has been released ahead of World Mental Health Awareness Week.

**Mark Hews, Group Chief Executive of Benefact Group, said:** “Giving and volunteering are crucial to civic society. The findings show us that being charitable is not only good for society, but also those who take part. The value of charitable acts is hidden in economic terms, as it previously has not been adequately measured. Our *Value of Giving* report offers first-of-its-kind analysis on how the charity sector significantly contributes to the wider economy, while outlining how donating and volunteering also bring benefits to our mental wellbeing. The cost-of-living crisis is understandably having an impact on people’s ability to give. But we know that there is an increasing appetite to volunteer time, and our report shows what we intuitively know, that volunteering time benefits all parties in the chain.

“Owned by a charity, all of Benefact Group’s available profits go to good causes, and the more the Group grows, the more the Group can give. We know how important volunteering is to the wellbeing of our colleagues and we encourage and support them to give time, money, and kindness to causes they care about.

“Many companies give time and money generously, but we believe the corporate sector can play a more influential role in supporting the charity sector. We believe the combined effort of businesses collectively donating a proportion of profits and empowering staff to volunteer can be a powerful force in society.”

Owned by a registered charity, Benefact Trust, Benefact Group is the third-largest corporate donor to charity in the UK3 and gives all its available profits to good causes. For more information on the Value of Giving, please see the full report here: LINK

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1. Value of Giving 2022 Report
2. Share of UK adults feeling optimistic: Those who donate and volunteer 46.1% v those who do neither: 27.0%
3. UK Guide to Company Giving 2023/2024

Methodology

*The majority of the empirical research in this report is based on proprietary econometric analysis of the UK Household Longitudinal Survey (UKHLS), which provides detailed information on life in our country at an individual level.*

*The UKHLS tracks a large sample of individuals in the UK over time. The survey contains responses from more than 34,000 adults, making it a reliable and accurate representation of the British population. The questionnaire includes questions on the frequency and volume of voluntary work, and the frequency and level of charitable donations.*

*This data also enables us to apply an econometric estimation model in order to specify the impact that being a volunteer or donor has on an individual’s life satisfaction.*

*We used the UKHLS to calculate the volume of voluntary work between 2010/11 and 2021. The UKHLS analysis was then updated using the results from a bespoke survey of 2,000 UK adults commissioned for this research, assessing qualitative attitudes towards volunteering and charitable giving against the backdrop of increasing living costs. Fieldwork was carried out by Sapio during September 2022. We used further data sets, including those from the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), to bridge gaps in knowledge in regard to charitable giving.*

*Using official data for hourly wages, we assigned a monetary value to this voluntary work. The rationale is that people provide work for free, for which they could usually be paid an hourly wage. This is then upscaled using population data to gain the overall annual value for a given year. Similarly, the average amount that people donate to charities is upscaled to arrive at annual values for the UK.*

*After quantifying the value of volunteering and altruistic giving, we analysed the effect that giving has on the individual. In particular, we looked at whether volunteering and giving to charity was associated with an increase in a person's self-reported life satisfaction, and with better mental health outcomes. Our econometric analysis also considered other factors that may influence life satisfaction, such as income, to arrive at a series of robust conclusions.*

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**About Benefact Group**

1. ​​Benefact Group is an independent, specialist financial services group that exists to give all its available profits to charity.
2. Owned by a registered charity, Benefact Trust, Benefact Group’s family of businesses provide specialist insurance, investment management and broking and advisory services in the UK, Australia, Canada and Ireland.
3. Benefact Group is the third-largest corporate donor to charity in the UK, according to the UK Guide to Company Giving 2023/24. It has donated over £100m to charity since 2016 and is aiming to reach its target of giving £250m by 2025.
4. Many businesses say they are different. Benefact Group really is. Find out why here [www.benefactgroup.com](http://www.benefactgroup.com)
5. The Benefact Group family of brands includes:
   * Ecclesiastical UK
   * Ecclesiastical Canada
   * Ecclesiastical Ireland
   * Ansvar UK
   * Ansvar Australia
   * EdenTree Investment Management
   * SEIB Insurance Brokers
   * Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services
   * Ecclesiastical Planning Services Ltd
   * Lycetts Insurance Brokers
   * Lycetts Financial Services
   * Lloyd & Whyte