



Christmas Donor Trends



2020



When is Christmas most appealing for donors?

This year Christmas appeals and campaigns are going to be more important than ever for the third sector. To help charities get the most impact from their campaigns, we have looked at our own collated data to explore which are the best days for online donations and what times of the day people are most likely to donate during the Christmas period.

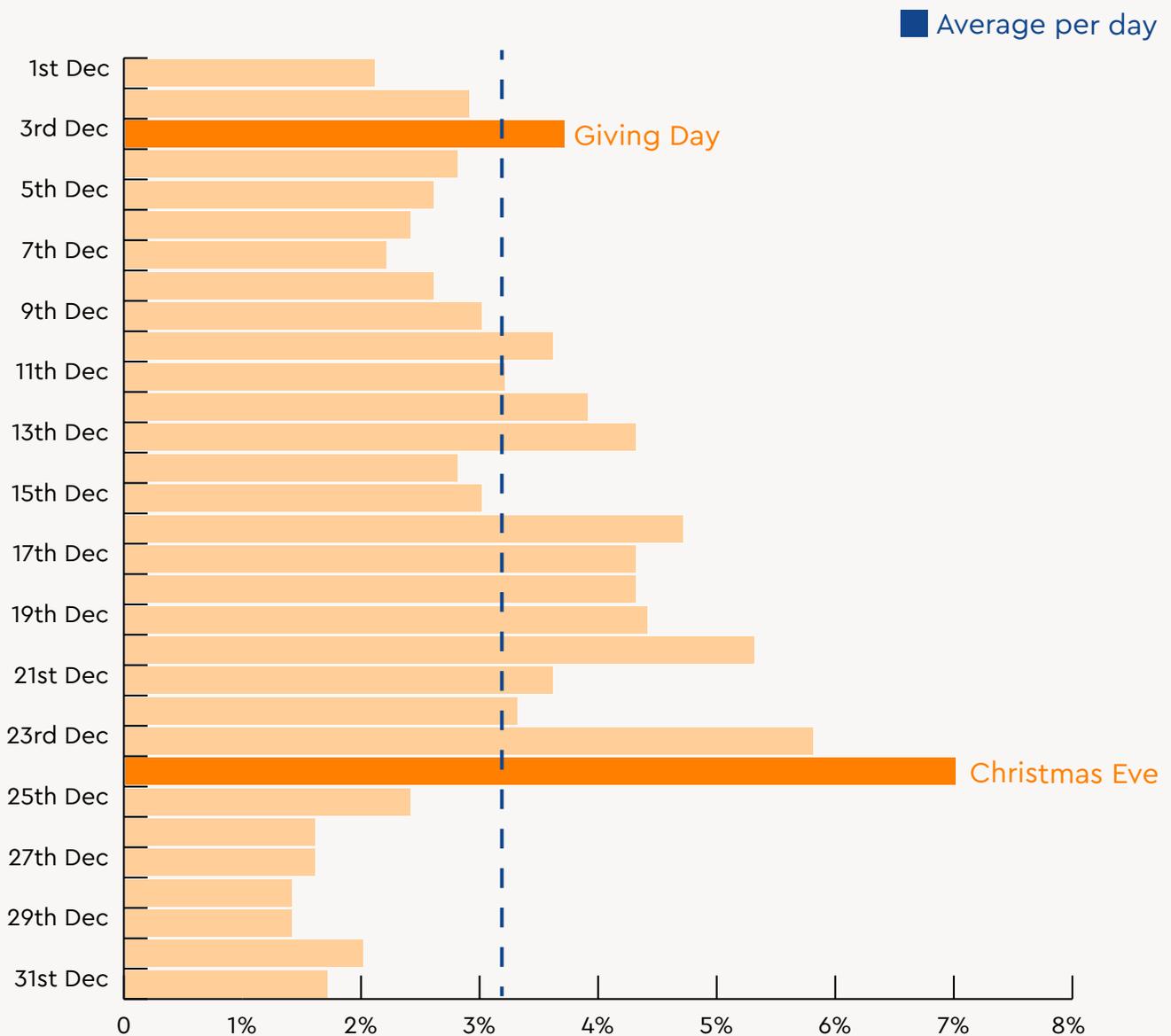
We looked at our data from last Christmas and New Year, focusing on November, December and January to find out when donations start to rise and tail off. From our data it is clear that charities should be focusing on December as their key month, as both November and January follow fairly regular giving patterns that we would expect to see most of the year round.



December in summary

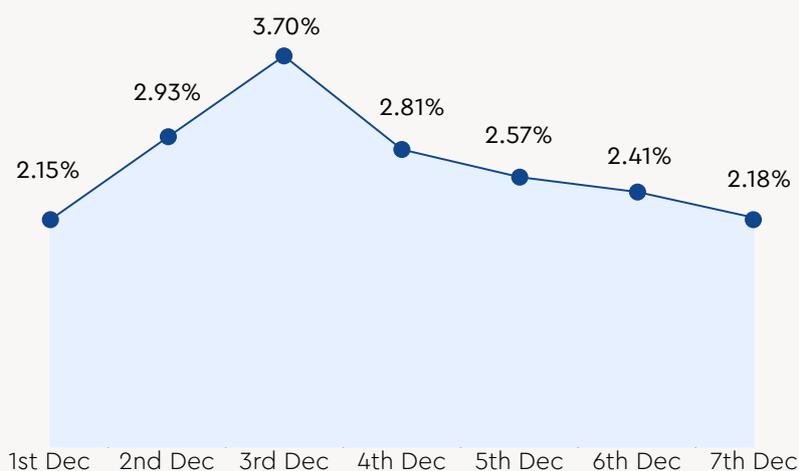
If donations were split equally across the month, there would be an average of 3.2% made each day. Only 2.5% were made on the 1st of December, and this generally steadily increases during the month, peaking on the 23rd and the 24th December. It is followed by a significant drop off from Christmas Day till the end of the year. The generosity on the 23rd and 24th December are no doubt partially down to the spirit of giving, but it's worth noting that this is also usually when people get paid in December, and no doubt this is an important factor as well.

Distribution of Donations in December 2019 (%)



How important is Giving Tuesday?

Giving Tuesday is huge in the US – its link to the Thanksgiving holiday, Black Friday and Cyber Monday have made it a phenomenal success, raising more than \$511 million in the US last year. But what about the UK? In 2019 it took place on the 3rd December and raised £14.2 million, which is a fantastic amount if not on the same level as the US. This was borne out in our data as well where we saw a small rise in donations around Giving Tuesday.



Distribution of Donations in first week of December (%)

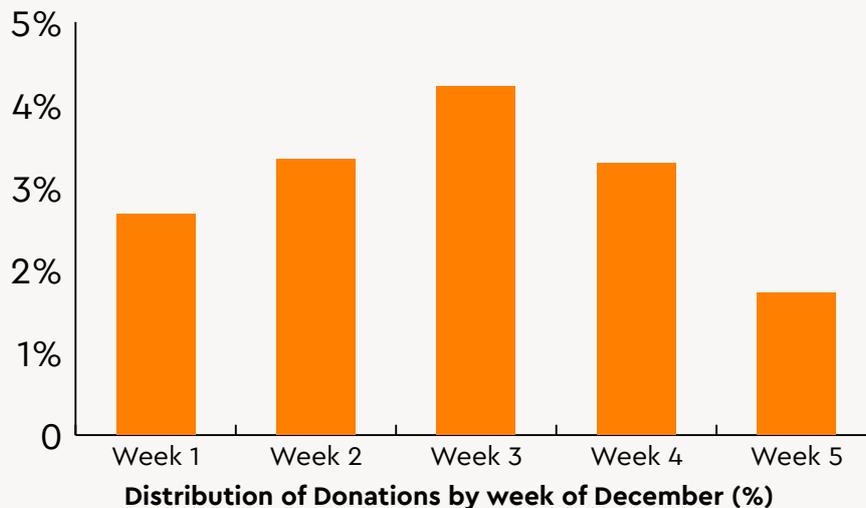
Here's what the stats told us. Looking at just the first week of December, we saw an average of 2.7% of the month's donations made every day. There is a clear spike around Giving Tuesday (3.7% of monthly donations), including the day before and the day afterwards. Outside of this there is little impact on donations.

So if you are planning on getting involved in Giving Tuesday, the data points to its impact being nearly completely focused on the day.

Friday Focus for donors

We see a drop in donations at the weekend every week. But this is much more pronounced in a big donation month like December. This may be down to more focus on shopping or catching up with friends and family, and so may be slightly different this year with potential restrictions and more online shopping. However, it is worth charities factoring this into their Christmas fundraising plans. The averages speak for themselves with weekends seeing 2.5% of monthly donations, and weekdays 1% higher with 3.5% of monthly donations every day. When removing exceptions such as Christmas Eve and Giving Tuesday, Fridays in December proved to be the days that got the highest donations.

The pattern of giving during December increases as the month goes on, as you can see from the chart below. The drop off in donations from Christmas Day onwards is also clear to see. This shows that the peak period for donations are week 3 and week 4 (up till Christmas Eve). Outside of the spike for Giving Tuesday, this should be the focus for driving donations with targeted paid media and campaigns. It is worth noting that this will also be the most competitive period though. Next we will explore what the best times of the day are for your marketing.

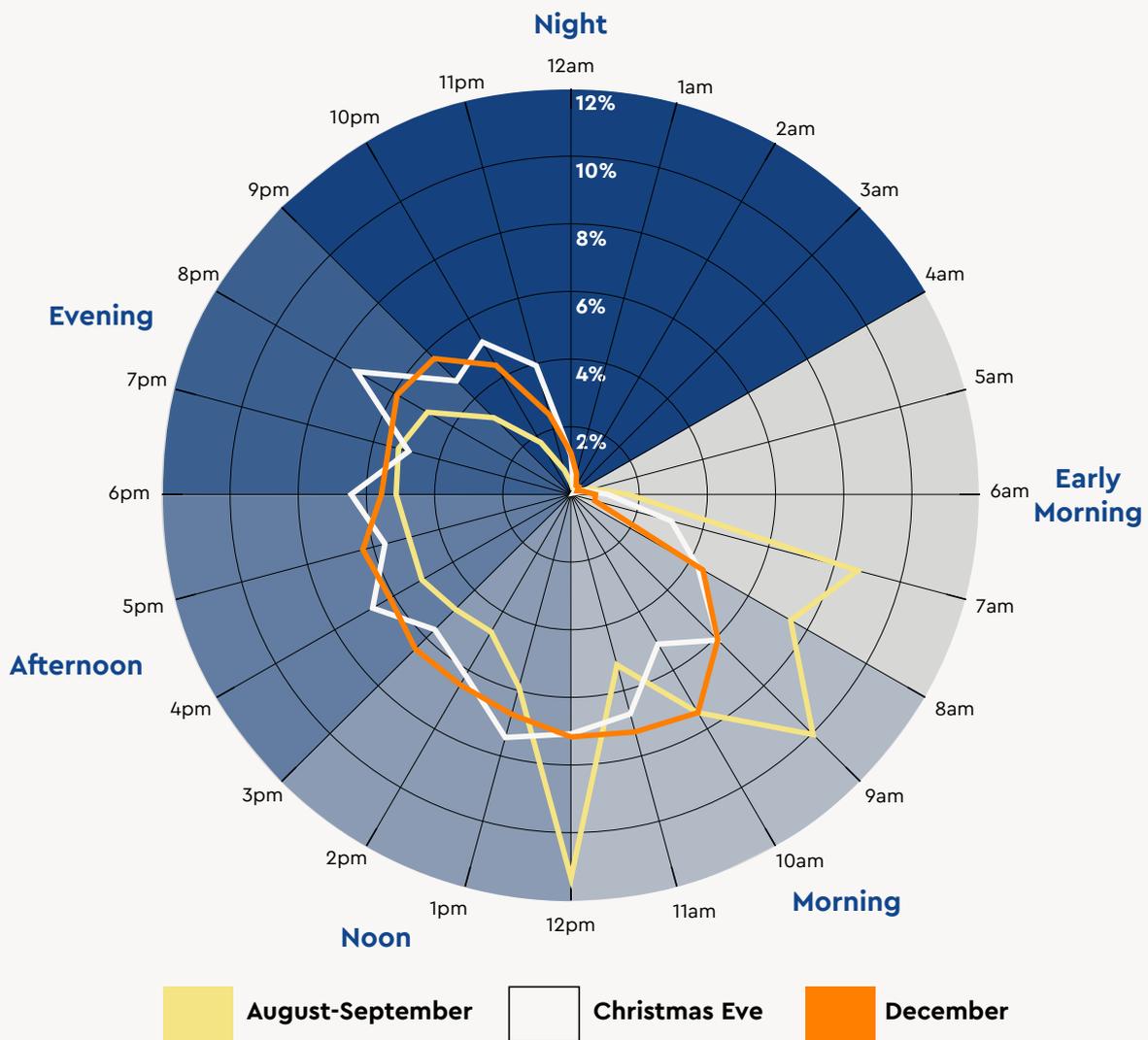


Is there a golden hour for donations?

So far we have explored the best days of the week to campaign on. Now we are going to look at the best times of the day for driving donations. While we have looked back at our data from the 2019 Christmas period for this, people's daily routines have changed significantly since last year. So we have also looked at changes over recent months in giving behaviour to understand if people have shifted in the times of the day that they are most likely to donate. Putting this data together will provide some insights into the best options for Christmas 2020.

Looking at the figures for last December, while no single hour stood out, there was a clearly favoured period for donating between 10.00–13.00. Across the month, these 3 hours accounted for just under 22% of donations being made during a 24 hour period. Christmas Eve specifically had a slightly later peak period with 21% of donations that day made between 11.00–14.00, and the day also had two other spikes around 09.00 and 20.00 which are worth factoring into planning.

Distribution of Donations by hour (%)



However, while last December's figures are important, it is also worth considering what has happened in more recent months to a change in donation patterns. Looking at August-September this year, we have seen a marked move back in donation timings. The peak period is now between 07.00-10.00, with more than a quarter (26%) of donations for the day made then. There is still a notable lunchtime spike of 11% of donations at 12.00 noon. However, the shift backwards of the peak period seems likely to be down to far fewer people commuting and starting their working days earlier. There is also a marked drop off in donations after 20.00.

Conclusion

There is a lot to consider with this data. Although no ordinary year, it seems likely that donations patterns through December will be broadly in line with previous years. So plan for Giving Tuesday on December 1, and then look at the optimal times to push your Christmas appeal messages towards the end of the week, and avoid weekends. There may be less competition for donors earlier in the month, but donors themselves are more willing to donate as the month goes on, and make sure you factor in pay day as this appears to give a boost to donations in the final days before Christmas.

While Boxing Day is a massive day for ecommerce, this is not reflected for charities. One idea here, though perhaps for Christmas 2021, would be to partner with an ecommerce provider and see if they would donate part of their sales discount to your charity. For example £5 off every £25 sale discount is given to charity. This could help to drive donations in this normally fallow period.

When thinking about your campaign planning in general, think about using the first two weeks of December to run a video campaign to build awareness. Then retarget those who watched the video to donate in the third and fourth weeks of the month. Don't shy away from testing video channels that younger age groups use, such as Tik Tok or Snapchat. We have seen from [our donor research](#) that Gen Z has been one of the most generous age groups since the pandemic started.

The hours of the day to consider for targeted ads, organic posts and email marketing are not as clear cut. While December traditionally has been late morning, the recent shift to early morning donations, because of changes in commuting patterns, mean it is worth spreading your budget across these two peak periods and testing and learning from which is most successful for your organisation.

Good luck, and if you would like to discuss your Christmas campaign planning, please drop us an email at info@enthuse.com.



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