



# In-Memory Insight – Remembering Together

Public Briefing

07 August 2023



# Introduction

In-Memory Insight explores the size, shape and scope of in-memory giving in the UK. We collect hard evidence to inform in-memory fundraising strategies and communications, and to convince senior management of the value of in-memory giving. The work is supported by a 'learning circle' of leading charities – over ninety of them in the past twelve years – who agree to pool their budgets, experiences and data to help build evidence and insight.

We know that the act of giving in memory is often comforting for the bereaved; providing focus or diversion, giving something positive to think about, and encouraging mutual support between family and friends. The motivation to give is intimately connected to the person being remembered, and charities must always respect this when communicating with in-memory donors.

This year our research had a dual focus, **scoping the in-memory market** to get a snapshot of current in-memory giving in terms of the demographics of donors, amounts given, channels used to donate, cause areas donated to and motivations; and **looking in detail at group in-memory fundraising**.

The results have provided consortium members with key market statistics to help inform their strategies and build a stronger case for investment as well as insight and guidance on how to steward groups more effectively. We are grateful to our learning circle members for agreeing to share the information in this briefing more widely.

## The scale of in-memory motivated giving

Legacy Foresight has been tracking the size of the in-memory giving market over the last 10 years using large scale consumer surveys, carried out at regular intervals. These track the take-up and value of in-memory giving activities in the UK and in April 2023 we conducted our latest consumer survey to get an updated picture of the market.

From the survey we found that:

- Nearly half of adults had been bereaved in the past 2 years and a third of adults had given an in-memory donation in the past year.
- The in-memory market is large at between £1.8b and £2.4b – and a lot larger than charities appear to be recording.
- Funeral donations are still the largest source of income, but only by a small margin and their dominance on in-memory income is continuing to decline.
- Young people are a key part of the in-memory market, giving higher than average donations and being more likely to say they will continue giving in the future.
- Online payments are now more popular than cash and cheques – and we are starting to see evidence of newer payment methods via gaming / social media.
- Health charities and hospices receive over half of in-memory donations (by volume) but loved in life charities still receive a high proportion, especially from commemorative objects and events.
- Around half of people think a charity knows their gift is in-memory motivated – but our consortium benchmarking data suggests the number is a lot lower.

## Understanding group in-memory fundraising

Over the last couple of years, In-Memory Insight has explored the post pandemic In-Memory landscape and the shift to digital in in-memory giving. The area of group in-memory fundraising has been increasingly referred to by supporters and experts through the different stages of our research. It was felt to be an area of growth but an area which wasn't well understood or well served, as in-memory groups don't necessarily fall under the remit of in-memory teams and often overlap with other fundraising teams e.g. events, community etc. [So, our focus for 2022/3 was to explore the area of 'remembering together' through group in-memory fundraising.](#)

(When referring to a group, we mean 'three or more people who come together to actively fundraise as a group in memory of someone they have lost. In the main, the group was remembering the same person, but we did include groups who come together to remember their loved one after a shared experience e.g. baby loss, loss to suicide'.)

Our research found that [group in-memory fundraising activities make a significant contribution](#) to the general in-memory market. We estimate that 41%<sup>1</sup> of in-memory income is being given as part of a group.

[Group in-memory fundraising is powerful and provides many emotional and logistical benefits.](#) Being part of a group positively impacts on fundraising outcomes in terms of amounts raised, engagement and reach. This was backed up by our survey findings which showed that donations as part of a group are likely to be higher than donations made by individuals.

[Group in-memory fundraising also takes many different forms.](#) It's complex and personal and often goes under the radar with charities unaware of the activities taking place or that the donation was made on behalf of a group. We found that groups were mainly engaging with community fundraising or events

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<sup>1</sup> Yonder for Legacy Foresight 2023

teams rather than in-memory teams, meaning that the in-memory motivation was often also unnoticed and/ or unacknowledged.

It was clear that [charities are often being held back by their own processes](#) when dealing with in-memory fundraising groups. Structures or systems were frequently not joined up or sophisticated enough to consistently capture information and/or steward in-memory groups differently from individuals or general fundraising groups. Being able to identify in-memory groups and record key information supporters share, directly or indirectly, is key to enhancing the supporter experience and establishing guidelines or set ways of working with groups which can help harness their power and maximise their fundraising potential.

[Digital channels and online communities were powerful tools for groups](#) and provide endless opportunities for groups to form, exist and support each other as well as to reach new audiences who hadn't necessarily engaged with charitable giving before. Groups tended to need less support from charities than individuals, as they support each other, but there were examples in our research of online (Facebook) communities having a powerful role in engaging, motivating, and supporting groups.

And finally, it's important to [remember that at the heart of all in-memory fundraising is a person, a loved one who's been lost](#). Whilst in-memory supporters are all different in terms of their needs, how public or private they are and how much information they share, they all appreciate and need acknowledgement – of both their loved one and their efforts – even if they don't think they do. Sensitivity is key but supporters notice when there is no acknowledgement, and it can reduce their commitment to the charity in the future.

[Bearing in mind that nearly half of adults have lost a loved one in the last 2 years and a third of adults have given an in-memory donation in the last year, the potential for in-memory giving is enormous. Groups make a significant contribution to in-memory fundraising and being able to steward them effectively could have a big impact for charities in terms of amounts raised and repeat fundraising over time.](#)

## More about In-Memory Insight

In-Memory Insight explores the size, shape and scope of in-memory giving in the UK. The programme aims to collect objective evidence and insight on in-memory giving, in order to build the case for investment, inform fundraising strategies and help manage relationships with supporters.

The In-Memory Insight programme is funded by a Learning Circle of leading British charities who agree to pool their budgets, experiences and data to help build our collective knowledge. We operate a rolling research programme, with each year building on the one before.

We define in-memory as “any type of charitable giving or fundraising commemorating the life of someone special”. A range of in-memory motivated activities are covered in our research, including gifts at funerals, direct in-memory donations both one-off and regular, the setting up of tribute funds, the purchase of commemorative objects such as benches and trees, participation in fundraising events such as marathons and bike rides, and legacies made in honour of a loved one.

The programme sets out to explore all aspects of in-memory giving, focusing on a different theme every year. Examples of questions explored include:

- What motivates in-memory donors to give to charity – and how does it make them feel?
- What do in-memory donors need, expect – and experience – from the charities they support?
- How many/much in-memory gifts are being given? Through which channels?
- What is the current status of in-memory fundraising in the UK?
- What can we learn from good practice examples – both here and overseas?

Topics are thoroughly investigated using a variety of research techniques including focus groups and depth interviews, omnibus surveys, good practice case studies, the analysis of performance data from Learning Circle members and interactive member workshops.

The focus for In-Memory Insight 2023/4 is in-memory products. We will carry out a comprehensive review of the current in-memory product landscape as well as looking to the future to explore what's next for in-memory products.

For more information about the programme or to subscribe, please contact Claire Truswell:  
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