



# Which charity Christmas card?

Which? investigates how much charities earn from the sale of cards in high-street shops

**M**ore than half of us bought charity Christmas cards last year, but if you get yours from a high-street shop, the charity could earn just 6% of the price.

Which? asked card shops, department stores and supermarkets what percentage of the retail price charities earn from the charity Christmas cards they sell. Figures include packs and single cards.

## What we found

The average percentage of the price that went to charity was 13%. The lowest percentage was for some cards sold at Next and House of Fraser which donated 6%. Both also sold cards that gave more.

A Next spokeswoman said: 'We pride ourselves on the fact that our entire card range is made up of charity cards. We do not have a smaller specific 'charity' range like other retailers, 100% of our designs are included in the total charity donation. Due to this we believe our charity contribution to be one of the highest on the high street.'

House of Fraser said that the card supplier, not the seller, decides how much is donated. It said that the majority of those it sold gave 10%-13%.

The card seller must print the donation amount on the back of each pack of cards, but just 35% of people who bought charity cards checked this.

## Top of the tree

WHSmith came top of the tree, with 100% of the price of one particular card

pack going to Children in Need. Its other cards donated an above average 20%. Other shops making bigger than average donations included Clintons and Waterstone's, plus Asda which sells a single card that gives 50% to Children in Need.

## Where to buy

If you buy a charity's Christmas cards from its website or in charity shops, it keeps 100% of the price, but pays the costs of producing, distributing and selling the cards.

There are also organisations that collate cards from different charities. Cards for Good Causes ([www.cardsforcharity.co.uk](http://www.cardsforcharity.co.uk)) gives at least 75% of the price of each card pack, although charities have to pay VAT and production and distribution costs out of that. Card Aid ([www.cardaid.co.uk](http://www.cardaid.co.uk)), an initiative of the Charities Advisory Trust, gives at least 25%. Both groups sell cards online and run card fairs, which are usually held in venues such as churches or libraries. They list these on their websites.

Buying cards on the high street does have its value. Charities earn an estimated £50 million a year from charity cards and high-street sales are an important part of this.

Mark McArthur-Christie, of Cards for Good Causes, says: 'High-street cards offer charities a no-risk income they wouldn't get otherwise.'

'The charities don't have to pay any of the costs of production.'



## OUR RESEARCH

We asked shops what percentage of the retail price of their charity Christmas cards is donated to charity, giving the highest and lowest figures where this varies; and what charities the cards support.

In September 2009, we asked 1,052 UK adults if they bought Christmas cards last year, and if they checked how much went to charity.

CARD SELLER	LOWEST % OF CARD RETAIL PRICE THAT IS DONATED TO CHARITY*	HIGHEST % OF CARD RETAIL PRICE THAT IS DONATED TO CHARITY*	CHARITIES SUPPORTED INCLUDE
<b>WHSmith</b>	20%	100%	Scope, Red Cross, Children in Need
<b>ASDA</b>	50%	50%	Children in Need
Waterstone's	20%	50%	Unicef, Save the Children, Dyslexia Action
<b>John Lewis</b>	10%	25%	Age Concern, Diabetes UK, Water Aid
<b>Clinton</b> CARDS	21%	21%	Marie Curie Cancer Care, British Heart Foundation, Lewin Chair for Pancreatic Disease
<i>Papurchase</i>	16%	18%	Children with Leukaemia, Terrence Higgins Trust, Farm Africa
<b>DEBENHAMS</b>	17%	17%	NSPCC, Children First, ISPC
<b>Waitrose</b>	15%	15%	RSPCA, Childline, Age Concern
<b>M MORRISONS</b>	13%	13%	Cancer Research UK, Alzheimer's Society, The Stroke Association
<b>POST OFFICE</b>	10%	13%	British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Oxfam
<b>HOUSE OF FRASER</b>	6%	13%	Childline, Help the Hospices, National Autistic Society
<b>next</b>	6%	13%**	Macmillan Cancer Support, Barnardo's, British Heart Foundation
<b>Hallmark</b>	12%	12%	Barnardo's, Breast Cancer Campaign
<b>TESCO</b>	10%	10%	Macmillan Cancer Support, Hearing Dogs for the Deaf, Muscular Dystrophy
<b>YOUR M&amp;S</b>	10%	10%	Breakthrough Breast Cancer, Shelter, Teenage Cancer Trust
<b>Ryman</b>	10%	10%	Oxfam, RSPCA, Wallace & Gromit's Children's Foundation
<b>Sainsbury's</b>	10%	10%	Fareshare, Comic Relief, Home Start
<b>SELFRIDGES&amp;CO</b>	10%	10%	RNLI, Mind, MS Trust

\*including VAT. Card Factory and Harrods weren't able to respond by our deadline. \*\*If cards were bought under Next's 3-for-2 offer, this figure would increase to 19%