



Generation *Shift*

Our changing engagement with charities and causes

Hello

We at Eden Stanley ran a simple analysis of our Charity Tracker data to get a snapshot of generational differences in people's relationships with charities and causes.

Now, we would be the first to tell you that research analysis by age alone is never enough to get a deep understanding of public audiences, because there is a huge diversity of values, attitudes, and beliefs in every group. For every archetype there is a myriad exceptions, and so you won't have to look too hard to find a 70-year-old tech-savvy human rights campaigner, or a 20-year-old direct debiter volunteering at the local hospice.

Nonetheless there are some real trends that tell a recognisable, albeit generalised, story about what makes generations different, and how charities are trying to engage them. So, as with all generalisations, there are some truths here.

What is more difficult to know is which of these generational differences simply reflect changes we inevitably go through as we grow older, and which may prove to be lasting societal changes. We think the answer must be a bit of both. So, in 30 years time, many 60-year-old millennials probably will have become more small-c conservative, but we suspect they'll still be glued to their digital devices, perhaps literally by then.

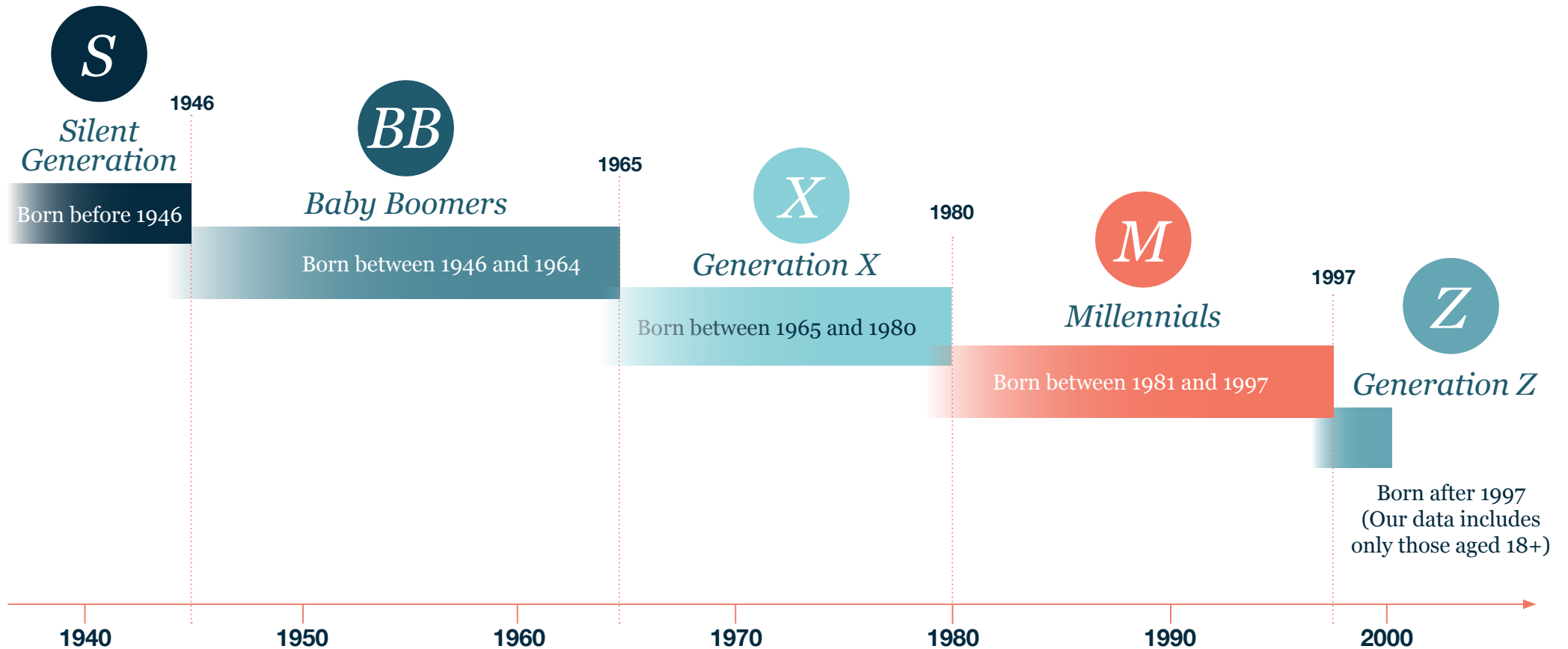
Enjoy. It's only a few charts.



The data used in the following charts are from Eden Stanley's Charity Trackers, collected over 28 months from November 2016 to February 2019. The total sample size is 33,600 respondents, UK wide, and nationally representative on age/gender, socioeconomic group, region and ethnicity.

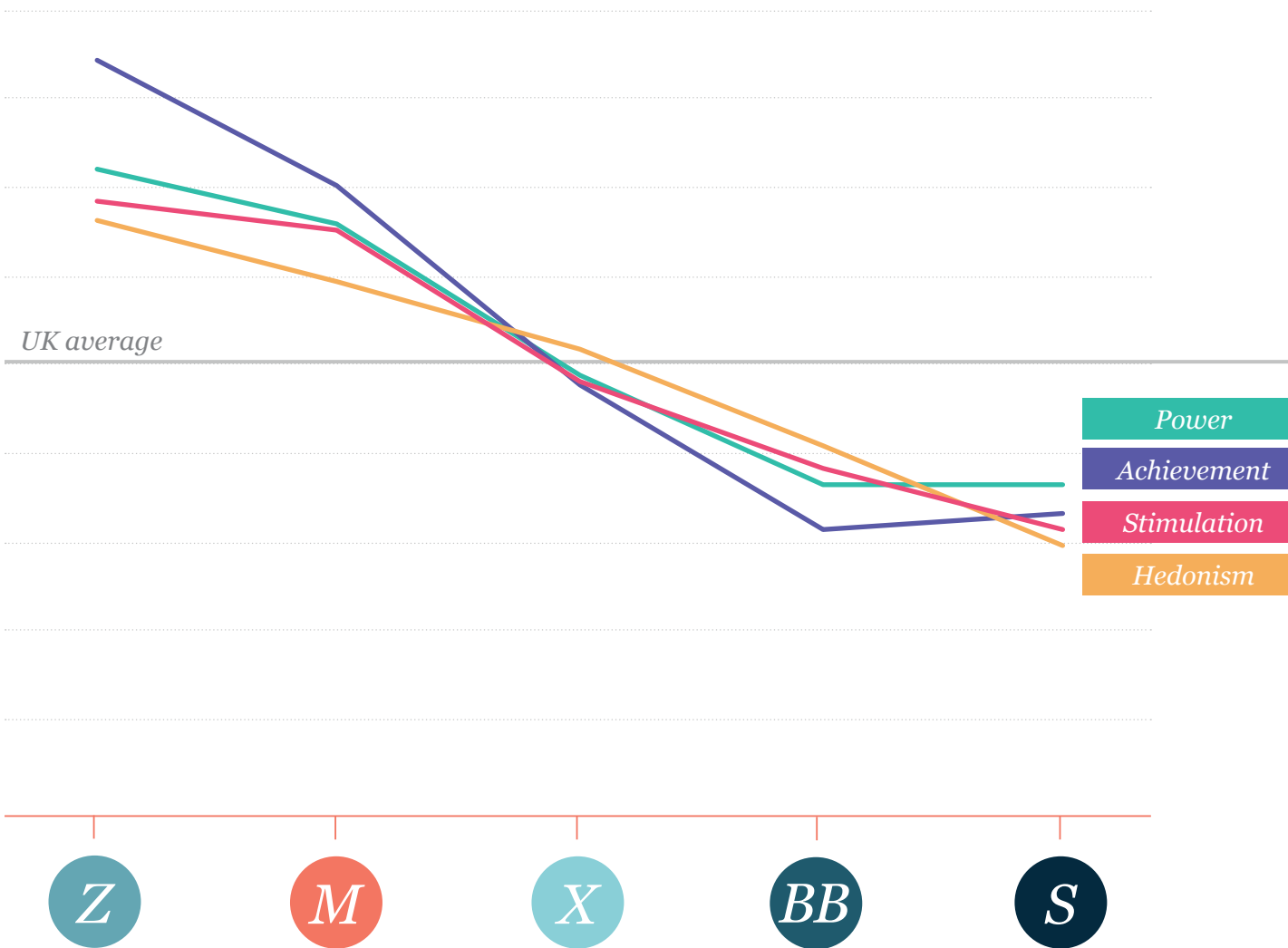
The generations

All the charts in this short report show differences between these five generations.



The data used in these charts comes from Eden Stanley's Charity Trackers, gathered over 28 months from November 2016 to February 2019. The total sample size is 33,600 respondents, providing

The values we lose



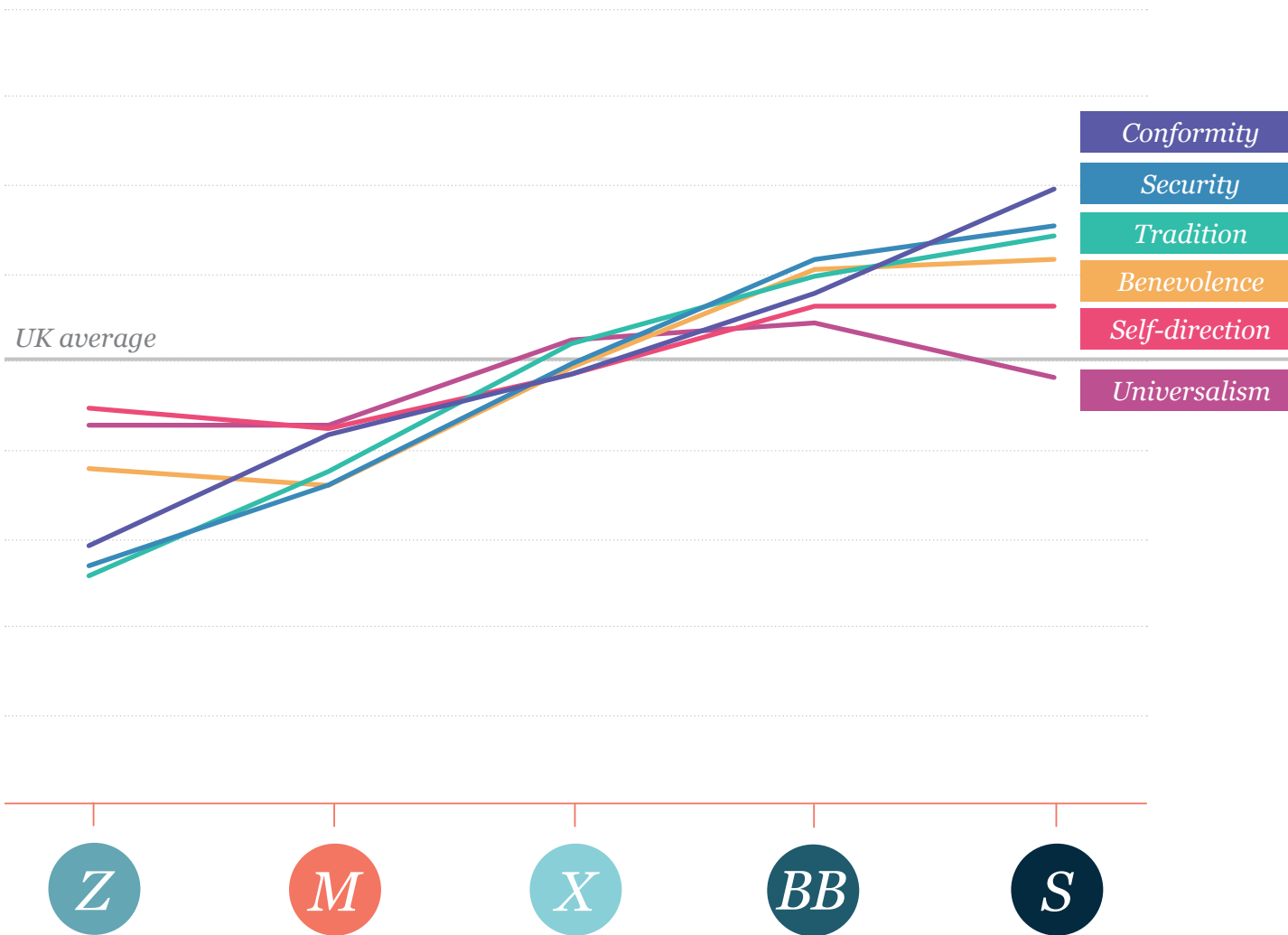
Perhaps the best place to start is to look at values. We've used the Schwartz model here, which is probably the most widely used framework in quantitative research. You'll find lots more information about it online.

These values offer a lot of clues about the kind of people we are, because they influence how we process information and organise it to fit our world view. Ultimately our values determine our beliefs and our attitudes.

When we're younger, our values centre on our own self-enhancement. We want to be powerful, achieve great things, have fun, and be constantly stimulated. As we get older these things matter less to us, and are less likely to be our main driving force.

This chart uses the Schwartz Theory of Basic Human values, a widely-used intercultural model originally described in 1992. This version is based on a 21-question survey called the PVQ 21, included in Eden Stanley's Charity Trackers.

The values we gain



Through our lives, the values of *self enhancement* are replaced by more outward-looking values, as we become more settled, and our focus turns to the bigger picture.

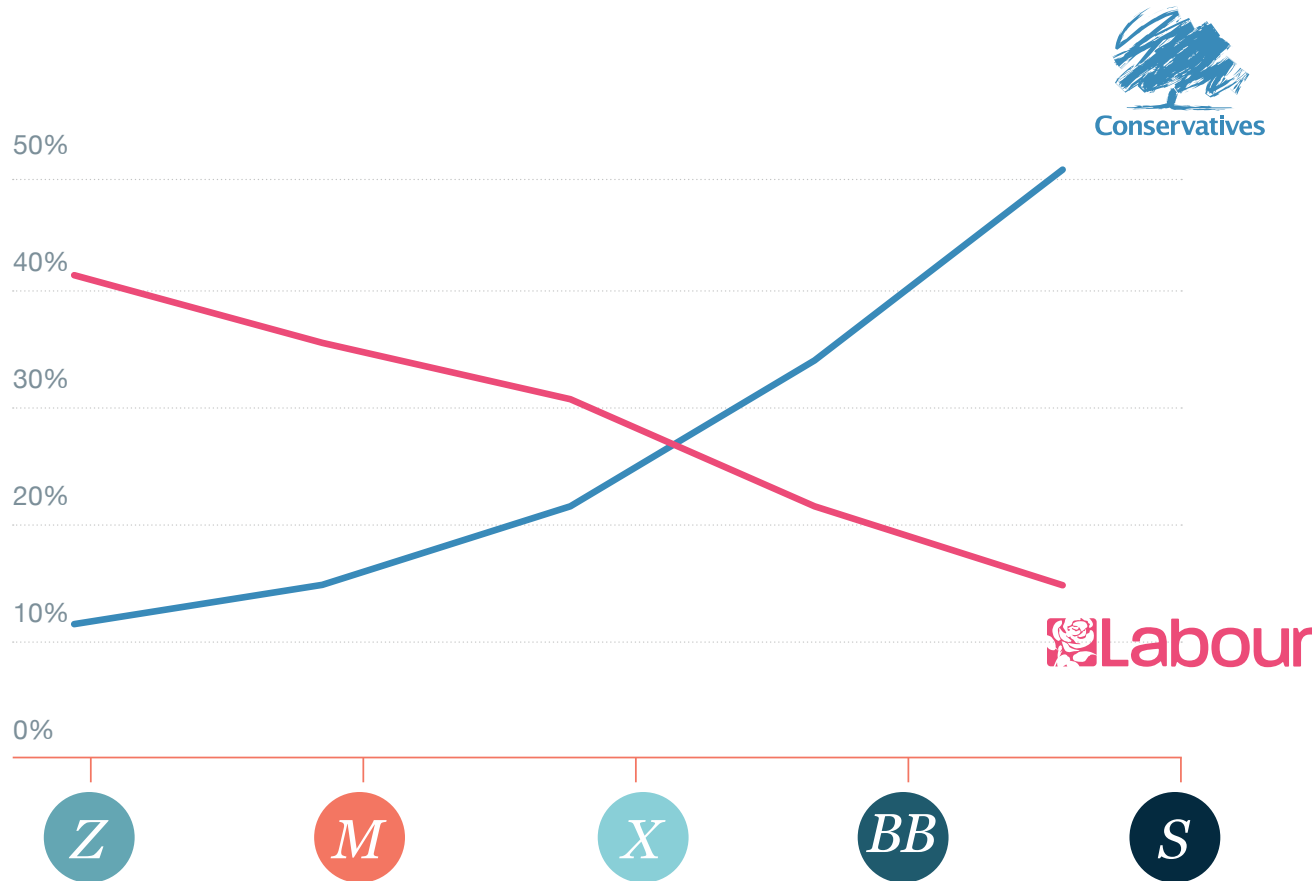
Some of us are likely to become more independent-minded (self-directed) as we grow older. We are also likely to become more motivated to help others, whether those we know (benevolence) or all people (universalism).

Small-c conservative values become more dominant too, such as conformity, tradition and security, as most of us become more interested in maintaining social order, and protecting our family or community.

This chart uses the Schwartz Theory of Basic Human values, a widely-used intercultural model originally described in 1992. This version is based on a 21-question survey called the PVQ 21, included in Eden Stanley's Charity Trackers.

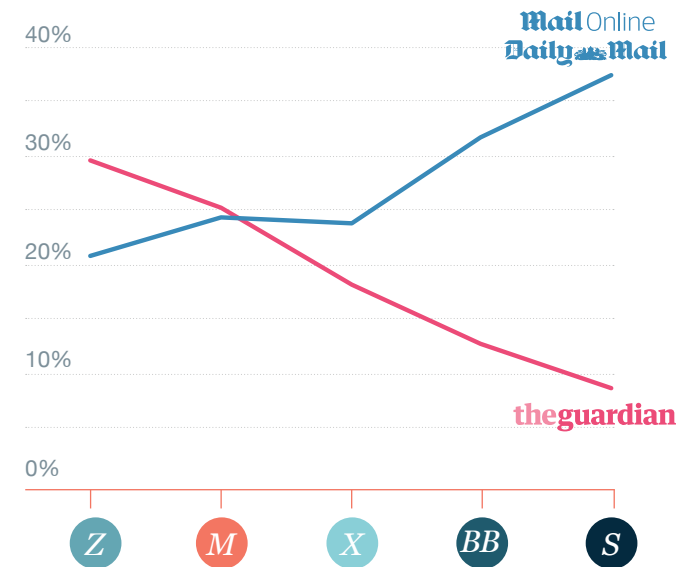
Voting intention

These shifts in values are most obviously expressed through our changing political views, as small-c conservatism goes large.



Where we get our news

Our political opinions are reflected by, or informed by, our media choices.

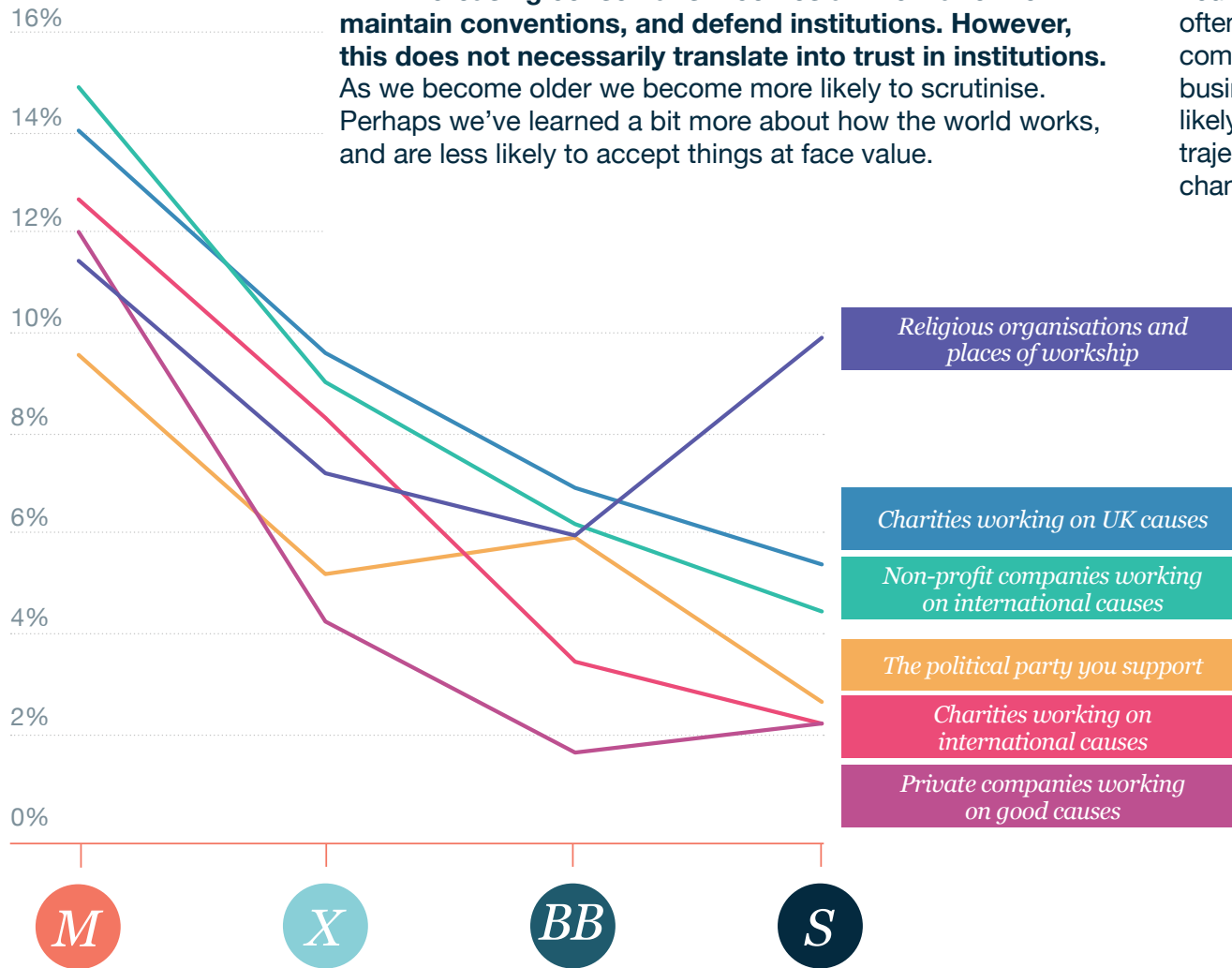


Voting intention: "If there was a general election tomorrow, how would you vote?" (Not all options are shown here).

News sources: "Which of these news sources do you read at least occasionally? (Not all options are shown here. Data is compiled from two separate questions, one about print news media, the other about digital news media)

Trusted institutions

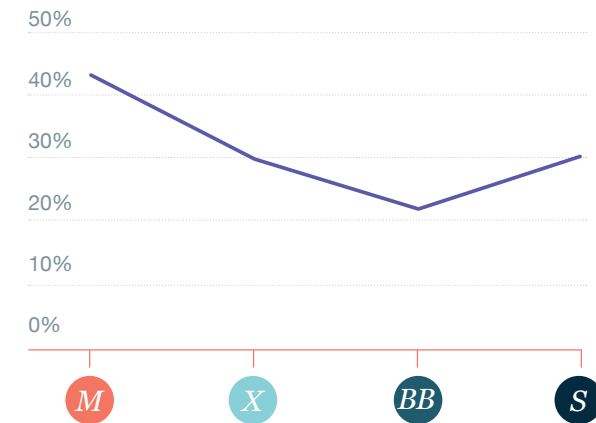
With increasing conservatism comes an inclination to maintain conventions, and defend institutions. However, this does not necessarily translate into trust in institutions. As we become older we become more likely to scrutinise. Perhaps we've learned a bit more about how the world works, and are less likely to accept things at face value.



Younger people, while more likely to be politically left wing, are often very pro-business too. This kick-starter generation has come to see societal change as just as likely to come from business as from the charity sector, and their role models as likely to be entrepreneurs as political activists. The 'horseshoe' trajectory for trust in religious institutions must reflect the UK's changing demographics.

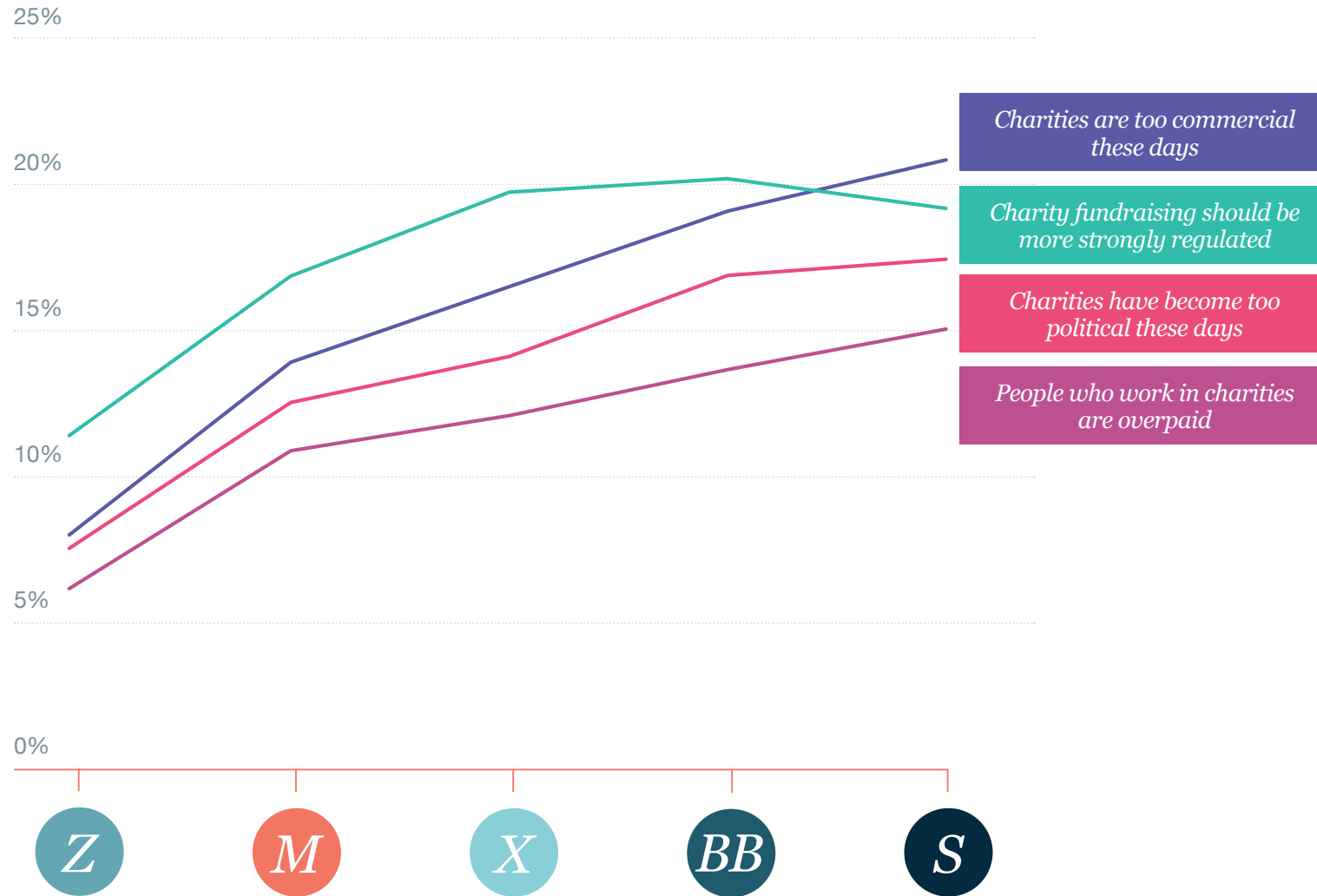
Attended a place of worship in the past month

What once looked like a decline in religious observance is now being countered by the increased diversity of the UK population, and the associated growth in certain religions, particularly Catholicism and Islam.



How much do you trust each of these types of organisation to make a positive difference to the causes you care about? (Strongly trust)
 Have you attended a place of worship connected to your own religion in the past 12 months?
 (Sorry we don't have enough Gen Z data for these questions.)

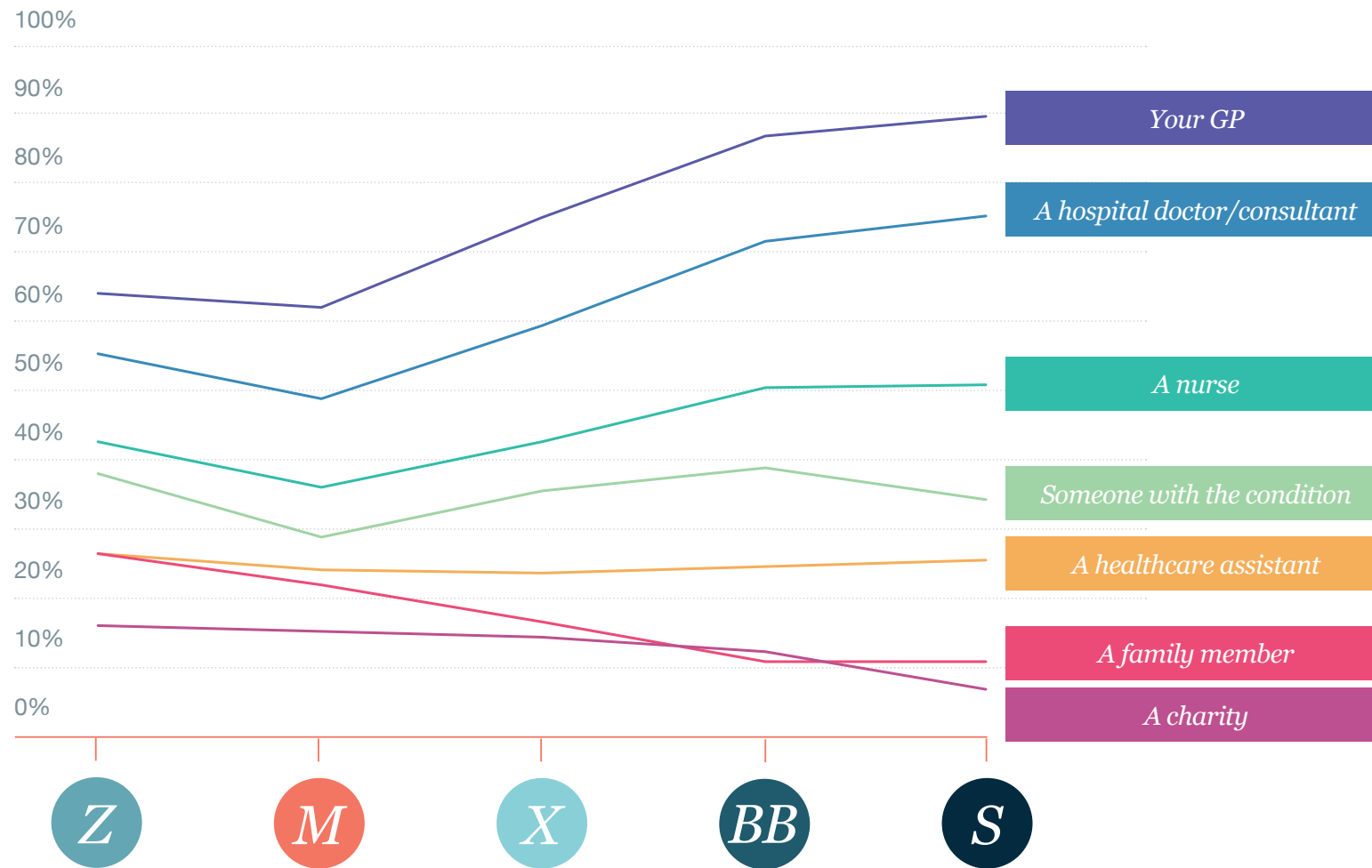
Negative attitudes towards charities



As trust declines, attitudes harden, and charities don't escape this trend. Probably this is reinforced by higher exposure to negative news stories about charities that have proliferated in recent years.

These questions are taken from a series of attitude statements tested in our Trackers. We have used the 'Strongly agree' data point. Including the 'agree' responses results in significantly higher scores, with similar differentiation between age bands.

Trusted sources of information on health or disability



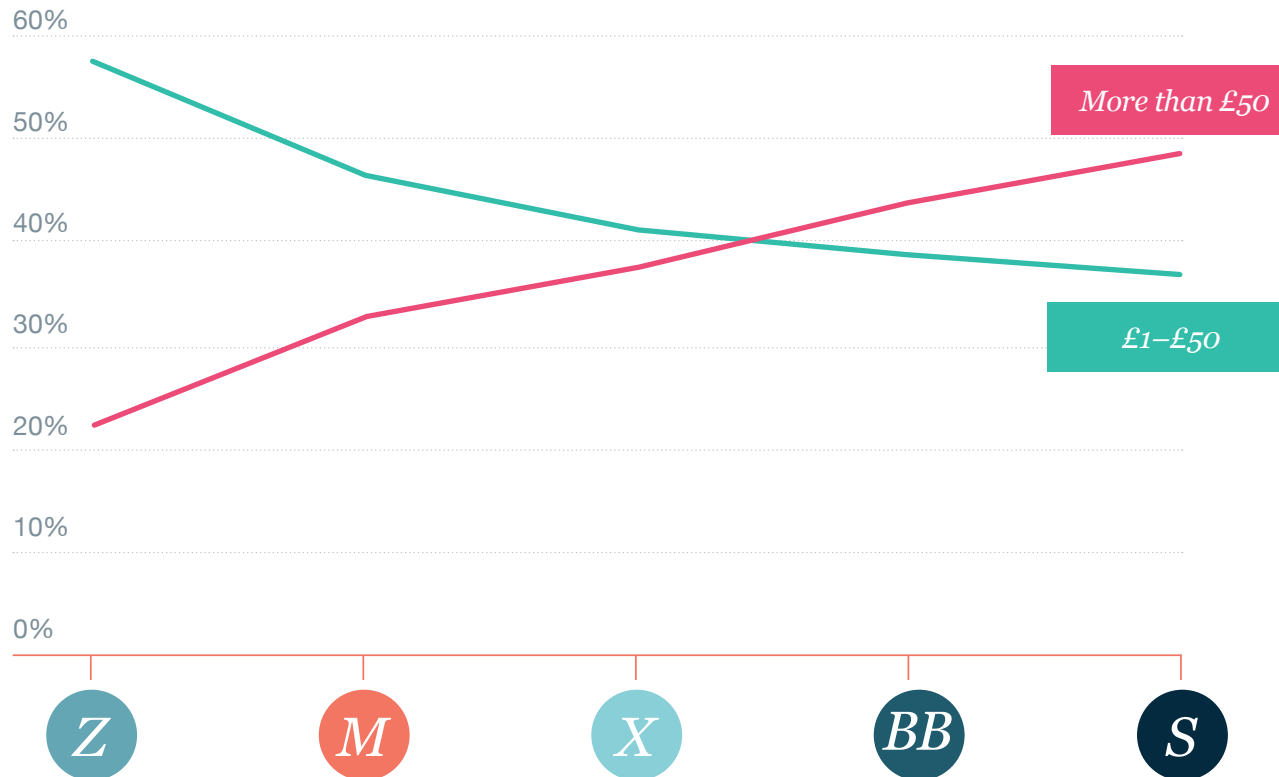
And while trust in charities for information on health and disability is generally low, it is much lower in older groups.

Meanwhile, our trust for health workers (GPs, hospital consultants and nurses) is high across all groups, and much higher among older people – perhaps because of increased exposure.

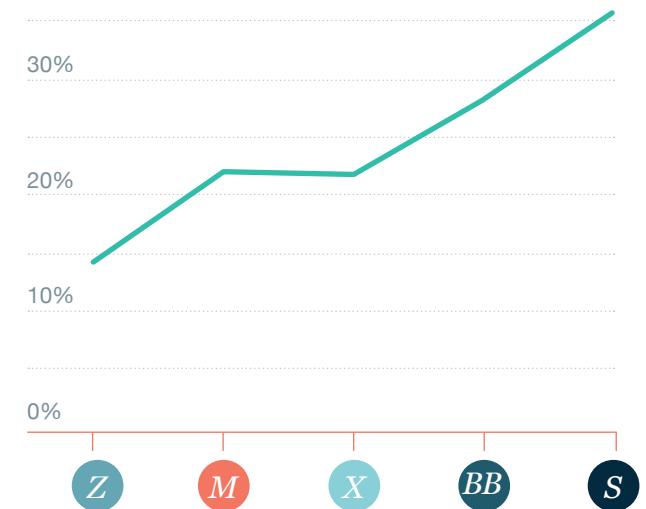
Which sources are you most likely to trust for information about health or disability? Respondents can choose up to five from 13 options, and the top seven results are shown here. Lower scoring answers include: a friend; an alternative medicine practitioner; an academic; a social media contact; a government spokesperson; a journalist (descending order).

Annual donations to charity

But if you think lower trust means lower support, think again. Older people still give more, and give regularly.



Have a current regular giving arrangement

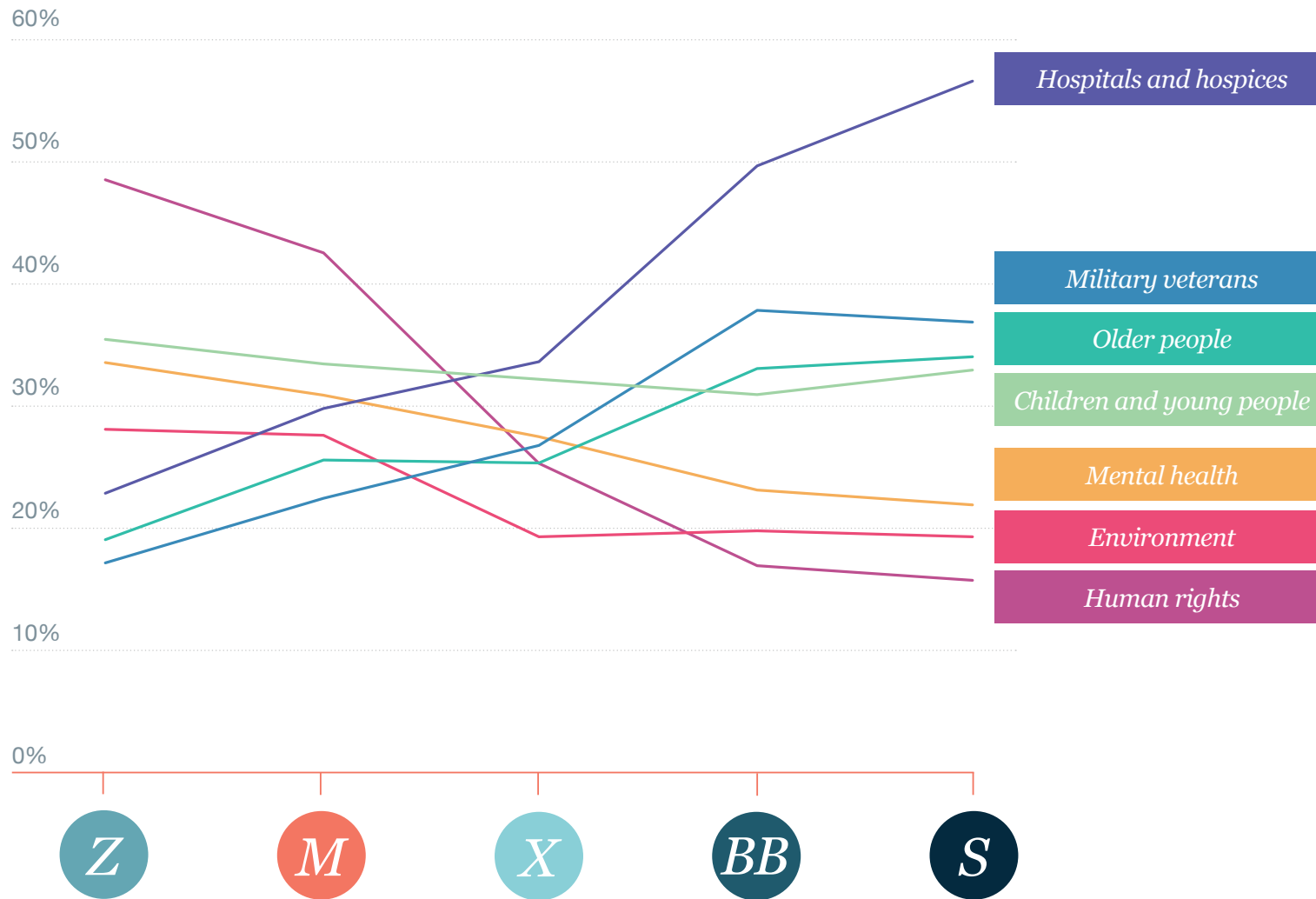


This is no reason for charities to be complacent. Many charities expect younger generations to carry their high trust in business and social enterprise into their later years. With the rise of cause-driven consumer brands, and new online fundraising methods, the established charity sector is losing its 'monopoly on good', and may not be the default choice as millennials grow older.

Approximately how much in total have you given to all charities in the last 12 months?

Do you have any regular Direct Debits, standing orders, or other forms of regular donation, currently set up for any charities?

Causes



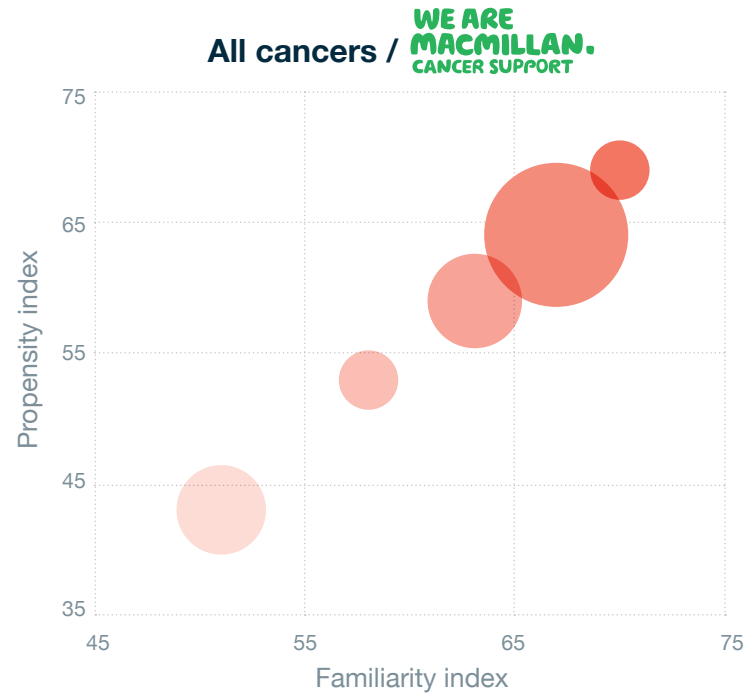
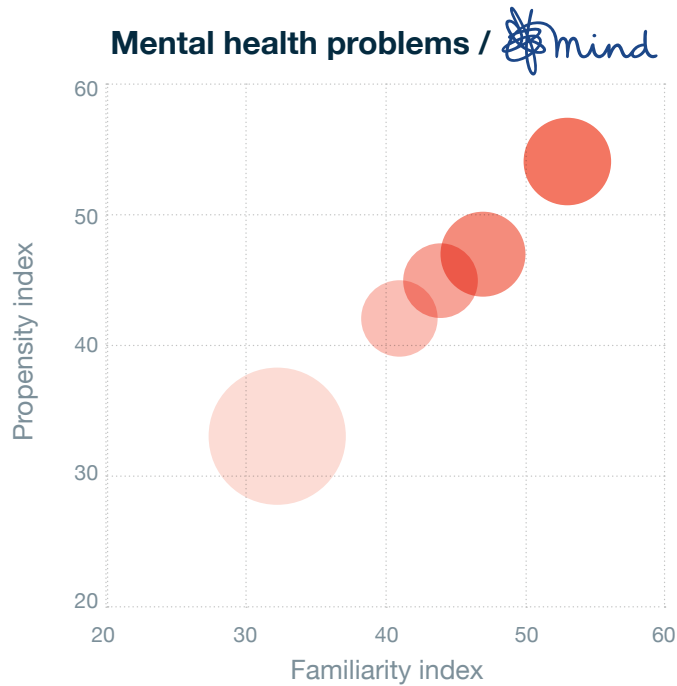
The causes we support tend to align with our interests and values.

Human rights, mental health and the environment are preferred by younger people, while older people are more likely to donate to older people, hospitals/hospices, and military veterans.

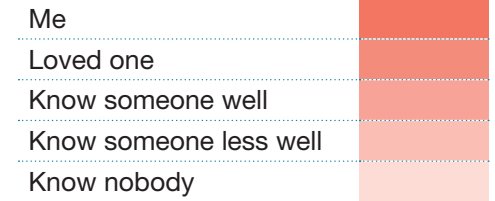
Many causes, for example Children/Young people (shown here) are fairly constant for all age groups.

Which of these have you supported in the past 12 months? (This can include financial and non-financial support such as petitioning or volunteering. 16 causes are offered, not all are shown here)

The role of proximity



Proximity to condition



Our research into health and disability shows that how close people are to a condition determines their familiarity, and propensity to support associated charities.

So, for example, Mind is popular with younger adults who know more people with mental health problems, or at least who talk about the issue more freely.

Meanwhile, Macmillan does well with older groups, more likely to come into contact with cancer.

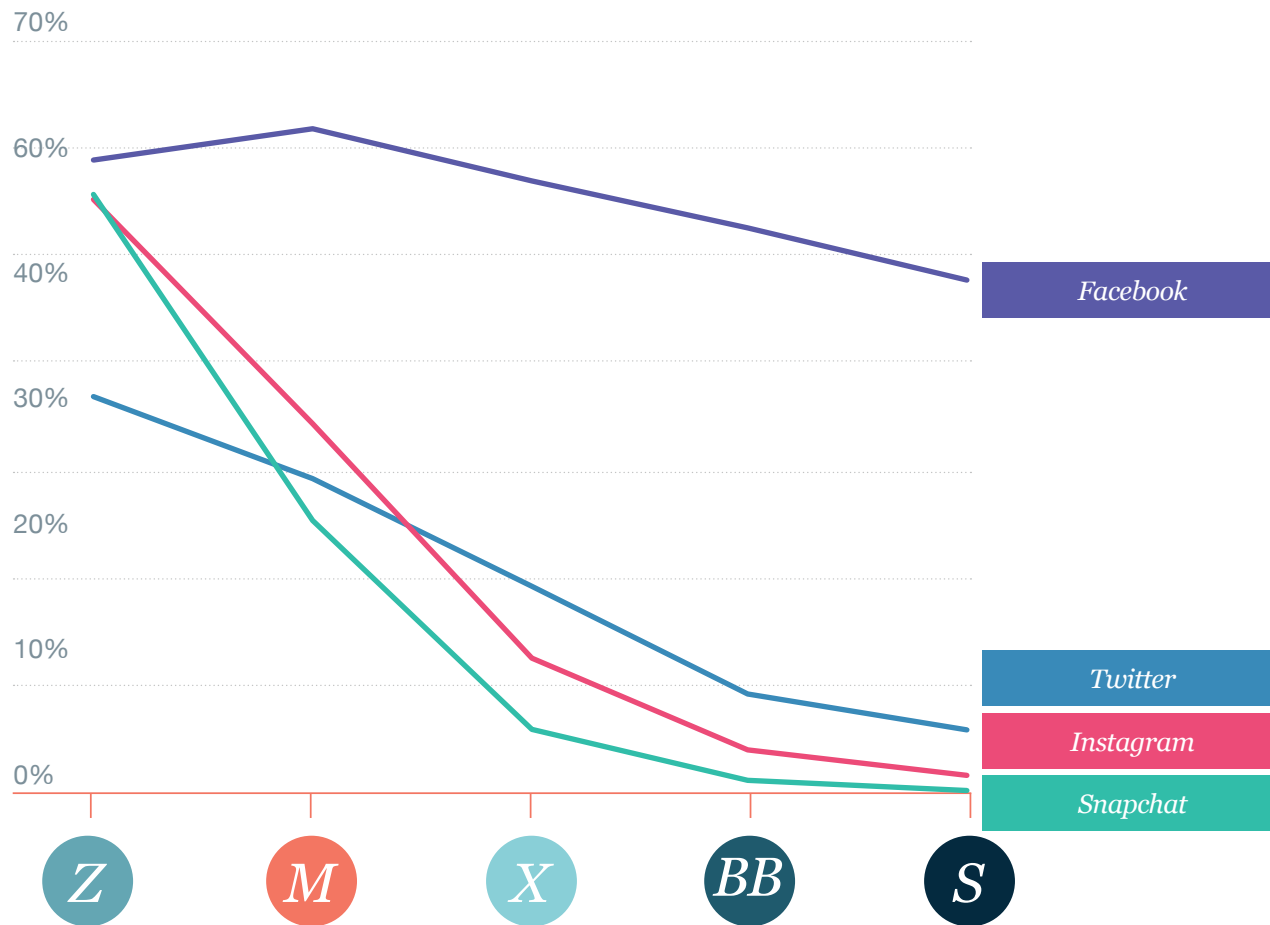
High proximity

Age group	Cancer	Mental health problems
18–24	10%	14%
25–34	15%	18%
35–44	15%	17%
45–54	19%	21%
55–64	16%	14%
65+	25%	16%

These charts are modelled from a number of questions, about brand awareness, brand propensity, proximity to health conditions, and demographics, included in Eden Stanley’s Health & Disability Tracker

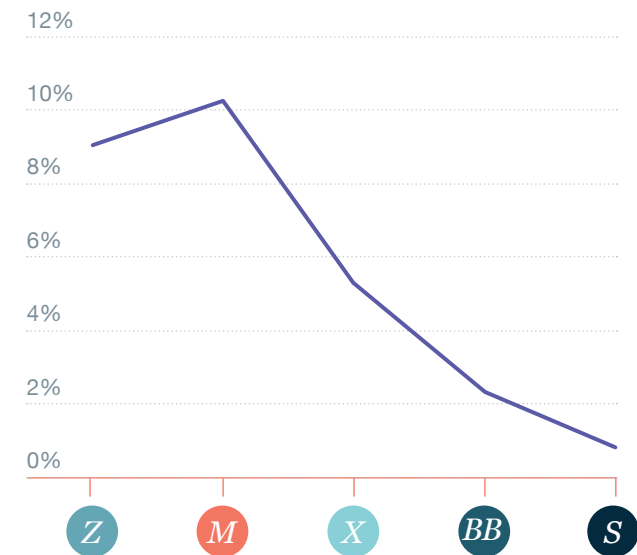
Social media platforms (daily use)

Charities are no doubt reaching older audiences through Facebook, but their forays into newer social media channels like Instagram or Snapchat are reaching only younger groups in significant numbers.



I share my views about good causes on social media

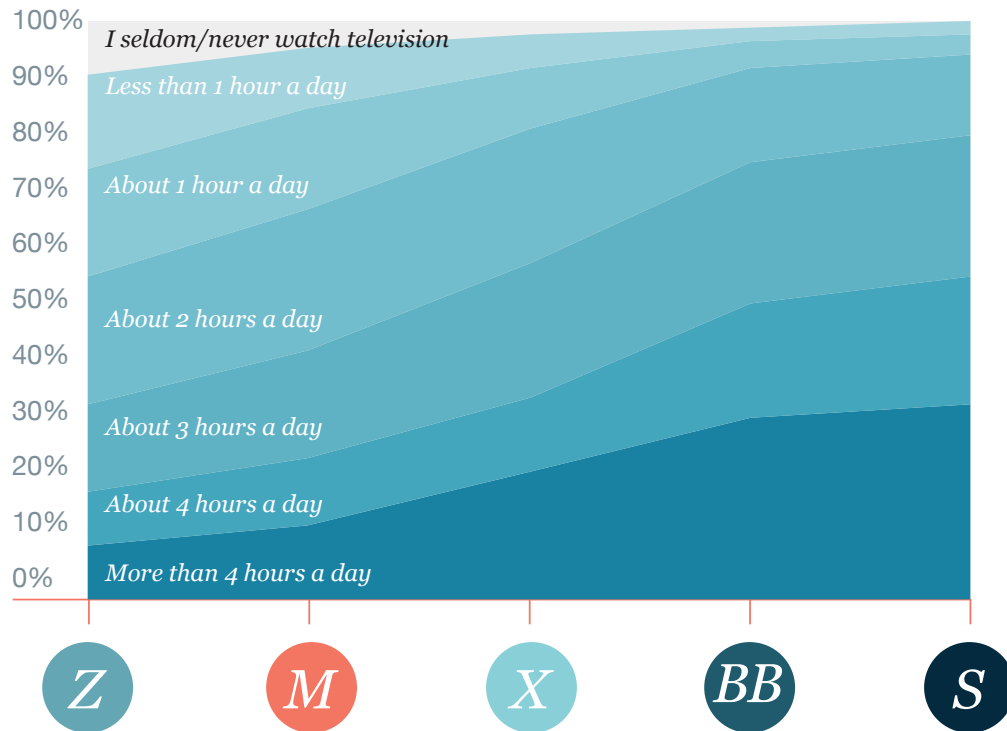
Those charities reaching older audiences through social media, have to work harder to get their message passed on. Younger people are much more likely to use social media to share their views about good causes.



So it's reasonable to infer that charities' increased investment in digital communications is disproportionately reaching younger audiences. This is reinforced by our brand tracking, which shows that all but the biggest charity brands are much better known by younger people.

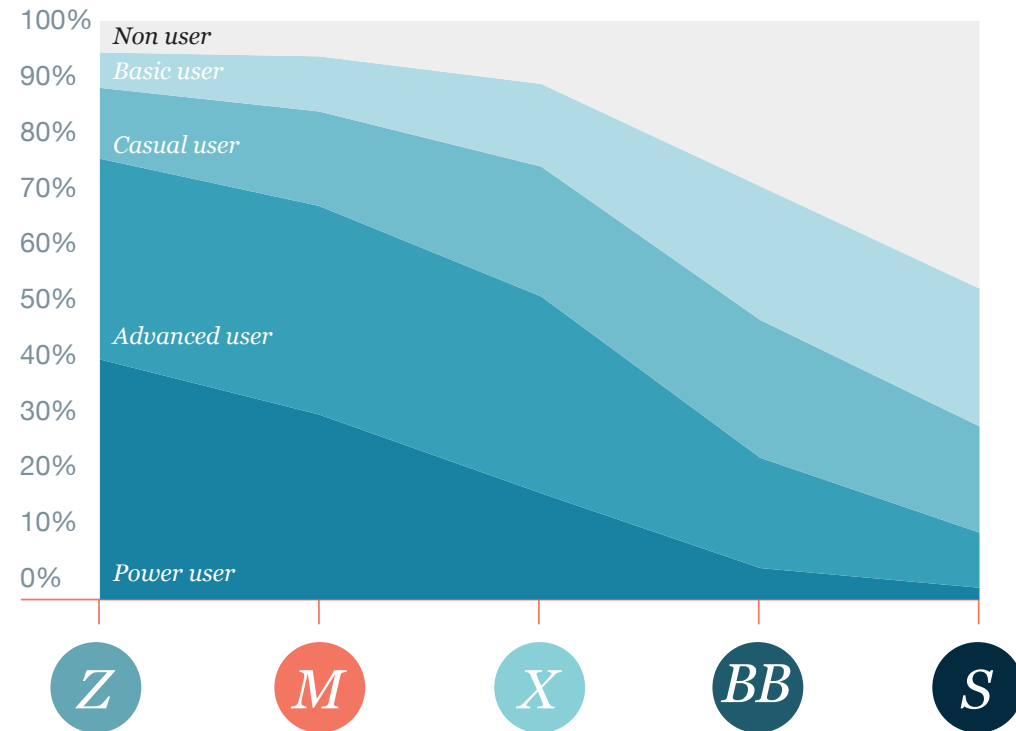
How often, if at all, do you usually use each of these social media platforms? (Chart combines 'every day' with 'several times a day')
I tend to share my views about good causes through social media (strongly agree).

TV viewing hours



The bigger charities that can afford to invest in television are bucking this trend, and still reaching older groups with *direct response TV appeals*. Younger audiences are not only watching less television, but when they do are more likely to watch on-demand services like Netflix, so they're much less exposed to television advertising.

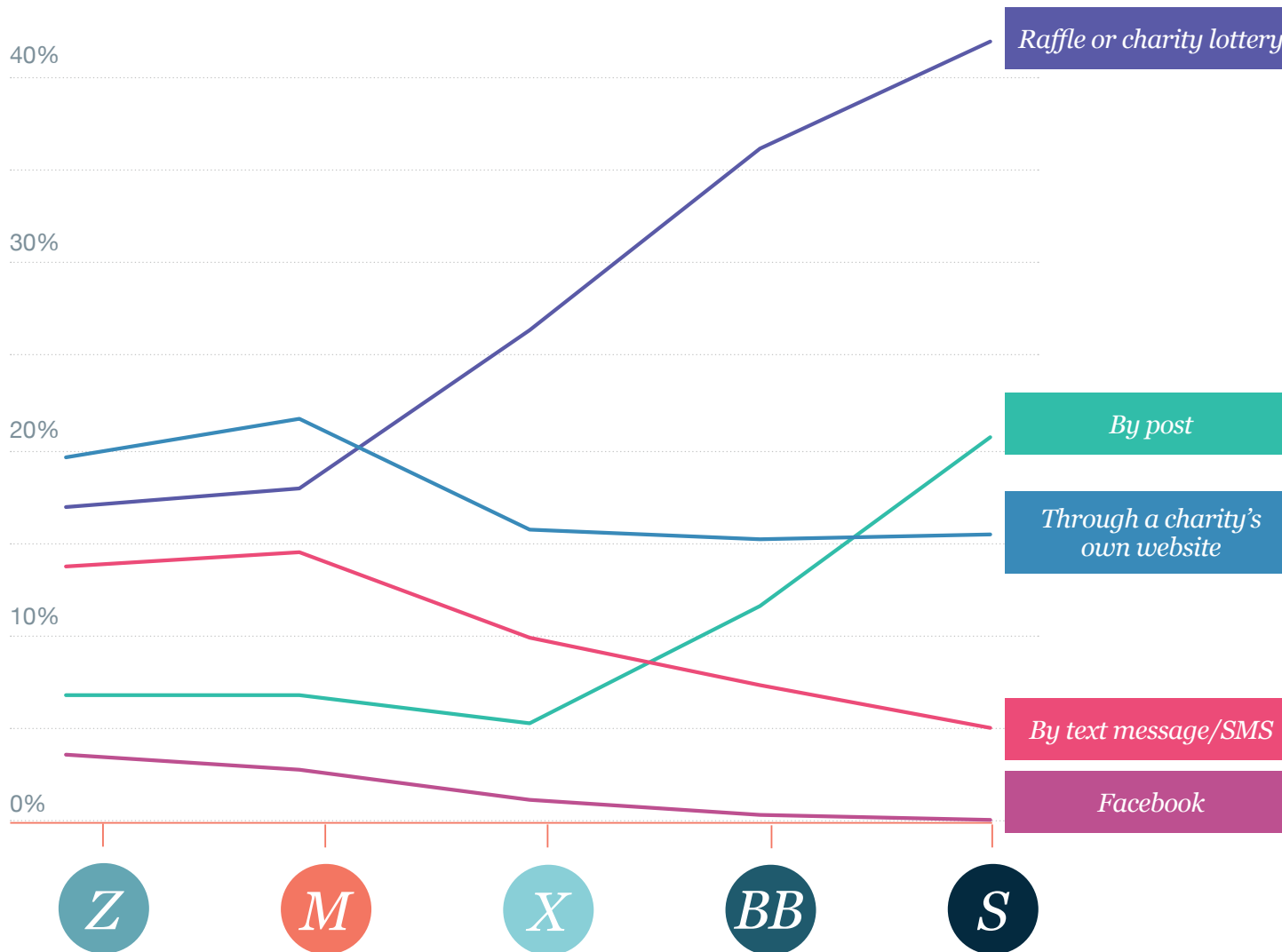
Smartphone use



For those charities looking to smartphone apps as a means for reaching older groups, the opportunities are limited. While most people now own a smartphone, it's mostly younger audiences using their sophisticated functions.

- Power user** My smartphone and I are inseparable. I use many of its features all the time
- Advanced user** I have a smartphone and I make good use of many of its features
- Casual user** I have a smartphone, and use its common functions like email, maps or the camera
- Basic user** I have a smartphone, but I just use it for calls or texts
- Non user** I don't have a smartphone

Donation channels

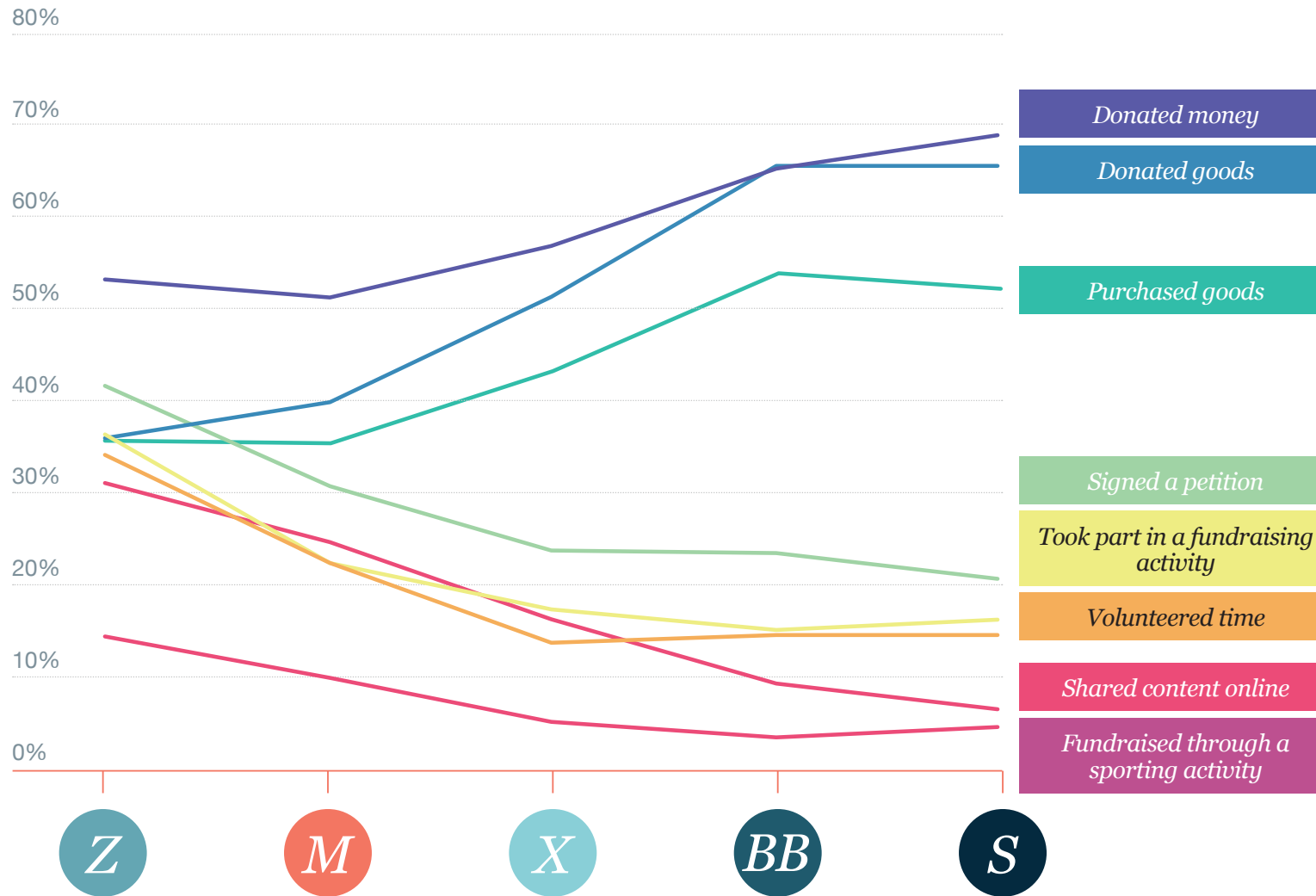


Traditional donation channels, like raffles/lotteries and post are still the most popular among older groups, while as you might expect, digital channels are more likely to be chosen by younger generations.

Still, charity websites are widely used by all age groups to make donations, even if fundraising appeals are promoted through other channels, like television or direct mail.

Now thinking specifically about the last 12 months, which of these methods have you used to donate money to charity? (Ten options are offered, not all are shown here).

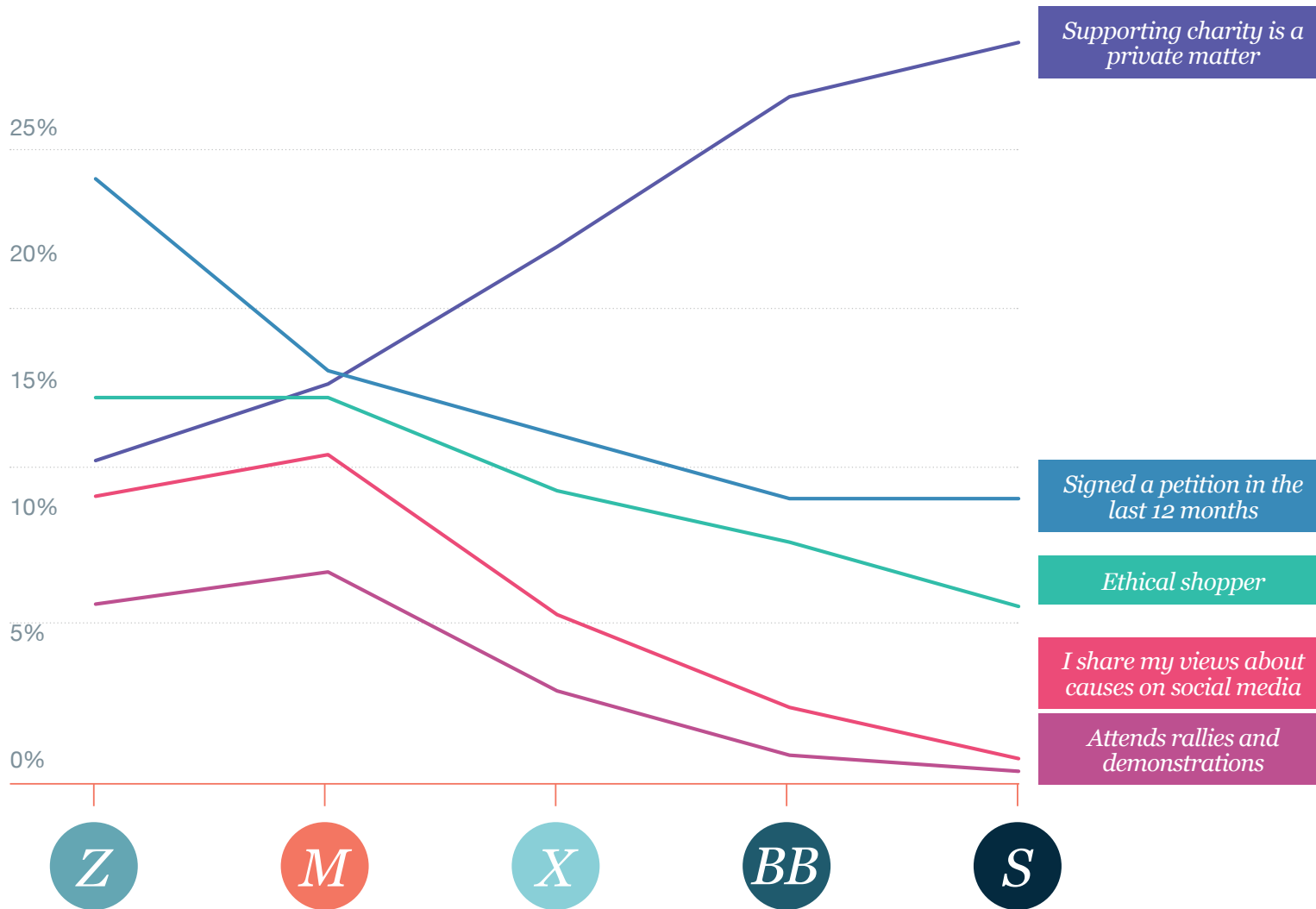
What are people doing for charities?



Support comes in many forms, and there are clear generational differences in how we help charities. Donating money, or buying and donating goods, are by far the preferred means of support in older generations. Younger groups, seeking active engagement, prefer more social methods of support, like participating in fundraising activities, or volunteering.

Over the past three years (approximately), which of these methods have you used to support any charity? (Not all answers shown).

Lifestyle and causes



The tradition of giving quietly, and without fuss, seems to be dying out, and is less present in younger groups. Many older people – the ‘give and forgetters’ – are happy to sign a direct debit and be done with it, many believing that talking about donating to charity is indelicate or even self-righteous.

For younger supporters, charity engagement is often a very public act, and part of an overtly ethical lifestyle, integral to their identity.

Most fundraising charities have realised this, and expect these attitudes to stay with people as they grow older. This is why the sector is offering a growing range of opportunities to participate, and charities work hard to build personalised, interactive relationships with millennial audiences, with a strong digital, or ‘experiential’ element.

These questions are taken from a series of attitude statements tested in our Trackers. We have used the ‘Strongly agree’ data point. Including the ‘agree’ responses produces significantly higher scores, with similar differentiation between age bands.

Conclusion: Pick your moment

As we said at the start, we'd be the last people to tell you that age alone is enough to explain what makes people tick. You only need to compare yourself to the people you meet every day, to know that while we share much in common, we are all wonderfully different too, regardless of age.

Still, the generational differences we've shown in these charts are a reminder of the things we do have in common. They show how our values change over our lifespan, and that UK society is changing in general.

Some trends mentioned here will affect your supporters or beneficiaries as they grow older, like a shift towards being more concerned about others, or a little more interested in their family's wellbeing than their own personal achievements.

And even if age is not the deciding factor in what makes us who we are, some of the most important factors that make people interested in you, such as entering the work force, becoming a parent, starting their retirement – and of course experience of the cause you represent – has a lot to do with timing.

So, we hope this little report will help you think about how to build relationships with these audiences as they transition between life stages. After all, you want to engage your audiences on their terms, not yours. And they're changing.

About Eden Stanley

Eden Stanley is a strategic communications, fundraising and campaigns agency for the nonprofit sector, with a track record of achieving game-changing results for our clients.

We help nonprofits find their audiences, understand them better, and build integrated strategies around them. We do this for UK charities, international NGOs and arts & culture organisations.

We also offer a range of highly specialised, next-generation data tools that our members use for audience segmentation, media planning, attitudinal research, and brand tracking.

edenstanley.co.uk

