

# Quarter of young people would give away £1 million

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What would you do with £1 million if handed it today? Remarkably, half of young people would give at least a large part of it away, with a quarter saying they would keep none of it for themselves, a new study from Cardiff University has found.

And while some youngsters, perhaps predictably, dream of fast cars, mansions and using the cash to meet celebrities, they are easily outnumbered by those declaring more selfless intentions.

The researchers, from the Wales Institute of Social and Economic

Research, Data and Methods (WISERD), said the extent of altruism among [young people](#) has not been subject to much recent research. This means the findings, part of a major probe into the aspirations of young people in Wales, are novel.

In 2013, 1,143 children in year 6 (aged 10 and 11), year 8 (age 12-13) and year 10 (age 14-15) across Wales responded to the question "If someone gave you £1 million today, what would you do with it?"

A total of 25.1 per cent said they would give it all away; a further 24.8 per cent would give some away, and spend or save the rest; 13.9 per cent said they would save all of it; and 36.3 per cent would spend all or most of it.

In terms of who would benefit from their generosity, some 8 per cent would give everything to charity, with a further 17 per cent donating all the cash to a combination of family, friends and charity, and another 25 per cent saying they would give a significant proportion of the £1m to charity, family or friends.

Professor Sally Power, who led the research, said the generosity reported by children was much higher and more prevalent than they had expected before conducting the research. She said: "We tend to think that children are selfish, and that as you get older, you get less selfish, and more collectively-minded.

"There's also a lot of media talk about children wanting the latest of everything, being obsessed by consumer goods and by celebrity culture. People fear that we are all becoming more individualist.

"So we did not expect these high levels of altruism. I was particularly surprised by the numbers who said they would not just give some of the money away, but who were going to give it all away."

The WISERD Education researchers acknowledge that the question is purely a "fantasy" and that the reality of how children would behave if truly presented with a seven figure sum might be different.

But Professor Power said that the findings indicated that there was at least a pervasive sense of idealism among children's background beliefs, with many showing strong feelings of generosity towards strangers and their families.

"The data indicate quite a strong sense of social justice, and the idea that giving to people in hardship, and alleviating the financial problems of parents, other family members and friends is particularly important to many young people.

"While altruistic intentions were surprisingly common, they were by no means universal and we should not ignore the large proportion of children who did intend to spend the £1 million on themselves.

"What is it that leads some [children](#) to be predominantly 'givers', some to be 'savers' and others to be 'spenders'? Exploring the social factors which contribute to these different dispositions must mean taking altruism seriously," she added.

Provided by Cardiff University

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