Royal Patronages of UK Charities:  
What Are They, Who Gets Them, and Do They Help?  

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Summary

Nearly 1200 UK charities have Royal patrons. Charities tell us that it takes some effort to secure and retain a Royal patron. The Royal family enjoys strong public support in the UK, and is widely recognised in the wider world. Some charities report getting great value from Royal patrons. But others report that their Royal patrons do nothing and just prevent them from securing patrons who might be more helpful. We came across two (non-UK) charities which fired their Royal patrons: one because they created financial cost with no commensurate benefit, and the other over behaviour incommensurate with the charity’s goals.

This paper aims to help charities make evidence-based management decisions about whether to seek and retain Royal patrons. It asks what a Royal patronage comprises, who gets them, and what difference they make to charities. It is largely an effectiveness study: it treats Royal patronages as an intervention in the life of a charity.

We take no view for or against the Royal family in general. Rather, Giving Evidence is interested in the effectiveness of charitable giving and charitable activity. We provide empirical research to enable evidence-based decisions. All of our work seeks to move beyond anecdote, and to look analytically and empirically at the relevant data. As a quantitative investigation of Royal relationships with charities, this study appears to be unprecedented.

An oft-cited component or benefit of Royal patronages is that the Royal visits the charity, attends its events, and/or hosts events for it in Royal palaces or castles. Our analysis suggests that charities should not seek Royal patronages expecting many public engagements with their Royal patron. We analysed the Royals’ public engagements based on information that the Royal family publishes (this may omit important elements of work behind the scenes, but no information is available about that). On that basis, most (74%) of the UK charities which have Royal patrons did not have a single public engagement with them during last year.

Within this overall picture, the number of public engagements that patronee charities get varies hugely. Most get rare public engagements, some get a handful, but a few charities get public Royal engagements (on average) more than once a week. For example, the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme had 62 engagements last year, and its international arm had another 52. In the last five years, Prince Charles has done 94 engagements with the Prince’s Trust, but none with Plant Heritage of which he is also patron. (We use many such examples in this document, which were mainly chosen at random.) We could not establish what, or who, determines the frequency or nature of Royals’ public engagements. However, it is clear that Royal patrons do far more public engagements with the charities that they founded themselves than for pre-existing charities that they take on: charities that they found are only 2% of the charities of which they are patrons but get 36% of their public engagements.

Turning to the effect of Royal patrons on charities, the sole outcome that is analysable and comparable across the wide set of charities which have Royal patronages is revenue, so we used that. The potential to increase revenue appears to be a criterion which the Palace uses, as well as being a benefit that charities cite. There may be other benefits of Royal patronage, including press coverage or staff morale, but we could not analyse these because they are not reported consistently or comparably across charities.
From the data available, we suspect that the effect of Royal patrons on charities’ revenue is small or zero: this is from visual inspection of the data, which this report talks through. We applied various sophisticated analytical techniques, but we could get no clear answer on the effect of Royal patronages on charities’ revenue. This is because charities’ revenues are very jumpy and uncorrelated with each other, which meant that our various analyses returned answers that were either obviously implausible, or had huge ranges that included both negative and positive values. (To be clear, we are not saying that there is no effect: rather that if there is an effect, we did not find it.) That said, in other words, charities should not seek or retain Royal patrons thinking that they will bring the charity money. Given that most patronages involve only a few or no public engagements with the Royal patron, a limited financial benefit may not be surprising.

Charities appear to matter to the Royal family: charities are the first permanent item on the Royal family’s website homepage. By our count, engagements with charities comprise around a quarter of the Royals’ public engagements (26%). Given this, our view is that the data published by the Palace on Royal charity patronages could be much better. In places we found the Palace’s data to be inconsistent, incomplete, imprecise, hard to use, and sometimes wrong. In one instance, it referred not to a charity but to a porn site.

The Royals have around 2862 patronages, and it required significant work to separate out their patronages of charities from those of other entities such as cities, companies or parts of the military. The press sometimes reports the total figure, which is misleading. We found that fewer than half of their patronages are with registered UK charities. We believe that the UK Royals collectively are patrons of 1187 registered UK charities¹. Of these, 123 charities have multiple Royal patrons, and 1064 have one Royal patron. By way of indication of the others, Prince Philip has patronage roles (with various titles) with 104 sporting or dining clubs, including more than 20 yacht clubs, Princess Anne is patron of 16 sporting or dining clubs, and Prince Andrew had (as of 1 November 2019) patronage positions with 30 private golf clubs or golfing societies.

On the question of who gets them, charities which have Royal patrons are disproportionately large: their revenue is (on average) nearly 30 times larger than the average UK charity. They are also disproportionately in London, the South East and South West of England – where the Royals’ main residences are – while more deprived regions seem under-represented. Furthermore, the analysis indicates (but does not prove) that the Royals take on patronages with charities whose revenue is growing faster than that of most charities.

Charities with Royal patrons are concentrated in relatively uncontroversial causes, such as ‘environment and animals’ and ‘culture and sport’. The sectors with fewest Royal patronages are housing, employment, social services, and religion.

It is not clear whether or not these distributions are intended by the Royal family. They may simply reflect the individual Royals’ personal interests and which charities have asked. The geographical distribution is particularly unbalanced. There may be a case for the Palace to occasionally review and re-balance the portfolio of patronee charities. It may be useful for the Palace to be clearer about the criteria and process for selecting patronee charities, to assist charities considering seeking Royal patrons.

¹ This number is somewhat imprecise because of the problems with the data provided by the Royal family, which we discuss in this document, e.g., its dataset has many duplicates, and uses names of organisations that don’t correspond to any identifiable organisation.
At some level, the effect that Royals have on charities is a matter of public expenditure, given that the UK Royal family and its security cost public money. Estimates of the full costs of the Royal family have been as high as £345m per year. Assuming Royal patronage benefits charities, there is a reasonable question about which charities get that benefit, i.e., the criteria and process for selecting charities which get that publicly-funded benefit.

Lastly, there is an argument that Royal patronages – by virtue of shining a high-profile light on charities and social causes – raise the profile of charities in general, and, by extension, of giving. We found no evidence of this. We investigated the picture both within the UK and abroad: within the UK, we compared English regions, and found that those with most Royal patronages are not those where giving is most commonplace. Looking internationally, we examined an independent ranking of 146 countries based on their ‘generosity’. The UK is not in the top five in any of the last four years, despite the high profile of its Royal family, and neither is any other country with resident Royals, though the UK is twice in the top 10. Aggregating scores across those four years, no country with resident Royals is in the top eight most generous countries. Indeed, in the most recent ranking, one country with a resident Royal family was almost bottom of the list. Though clearly both sets of ratings could have any number of causes unrelated to the Royals, neither supports the view that Royals increase generosity.

There are many other lines of enquiry that may be worth pursuing related to both Royal and non-Royal patrons, and we close by suggesting some areas for future research.

Table 1: Summary of the key numerical findings from this work

| Members of the Royal family who have patronages | 19³ |
| Total patronages (across all Royals) | 2862 |
| Number of patronees which are UK registered charities | 1187 41.5% of all patronages |
| Number of UK registered charities founded by members of the Royal family | 25 0.8% of all patronages 2% of UK patronee charities |
| Number of Royal engagements in 2019 | 3357 |
| Number of Royal engagements with UK patronee charities in 2019 | 888 26% of all engagements |
| Number of Royal engagements with UK patronee charities founded by a member of the Royal family | 317 9% of all engagements 36% of all charity engagements |

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² Republic, a campaign group, estimates the full cost to the public purse of the Royal family to be £345m. We know that 26% of the Royals’ public engagements are with charities, and if we assume that public engagements are representative of their workload and take Republic’s number, that would be £89.7m spent on UK charities, per year. We further estimate that, of those public engagements with charities, 36% are with charities that the Royals founded themselves. That represents £32.3m annually. That is about the revenue of CentrePoint Soho, the homelessness charity of which Prince William is patron and with which his mother was involved, in the most recent year for which there were accounts when we did our analysis.

³ The 17 in the list of working Royals in Box 1, plus Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie
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Structure of this document

First, we look at what a Royal patronage is. In other words, what is the intervention that we are assessing?

Second, we look at which charities get Royal patronages. We analyse the set of UK charities that have Royal patronages, by geography, size, and sector.

Third, we look at the effect that Royal patronages have on charities. Various criteria and benefits of Royal patronage are cited, the sole outcome which is analysable is revenue. So we used that.

Fourth, we look at whether Royals increase generosity. We look in England, at data comparing the regions in terms of the proportion of people who give; and we look internationally at data comparing countries in terms of their populations’ ‘generosity’.

Our methods and data sources are described in detail in the appendix. The methods are presented in the sequence in which the data are presented in the body of the report.

The research and writing were done during December 2019 - June 2020.

A note on terminology

For brevity, this document refers to an organisation which has a Royal patron as a ‘patronee’. Some patronees are charities, and others are not: they might be parts of the military, or public sector, or private organisations (the list includes various private clubs). This document is concerned with the effect of Royal patronages on UK registered charities, so in general, the term ‘patronee’ means them.

For the readers’ ease, we use the convention of The Economist newspaper, and refer to the members of the Royal family (MRFs) by the name most likely to be familiar, e.g., Prince Charles rather than the Prince of Wales, and Kate rather than the Duchess of Cambridge. For concision, we do not use titles such as Her Majesty or Her Royal Highness at all.

The existing literature on this topic

We searched Scholar Google for relevant previous literature, and consulted various academics in relevant fields. We found very little relevant material. We found no studies on the distribution or effect of Royal patronages, or why charities seek or have Royal patrons. We found one surveyvi from 2017 of charities who have the Queen as patron: it says that “little research has been conducted into the value of royal patronage”.

We found some research about the effect of non-Royal celebrity involvement in charities. For example, a studyvi by Dr Michael Sanders found that celebrities have an effect on fundraising in the short-term, but that this effect is either small or attenuates over time. Overall, we believe this paper to be unprecedented, in (a) providing objective and quantitative analysis of what Royal patronages comprise, and (b) attempting to objectively quantify their value.
Box 1: Who’s who in the UK Royal family?

Because this report may interest people outside the UK and/or who are not familiar with the UK Royal family, we provide here a little guide to the relevant parts of it.

The UK Royal family’s website lists the MRFs who have patronages. They are listed below. For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with the UK Royal family, we give their official title, and in brackets the name which may be more commonly known. The figure given for each is their position in the line of succession. We use = to designate that the individual is the spouse of the preceding individual.

The Queen

= The Duke of Edinburgh (Prince Philip)

The Prince of Wales (Prince Charles†, 1)

= The Duchess of Cornwall (Camilla)

The Duke of Cambridge (Prince William), 2

= The Duchess of Cambridge (Kate)

The Duke of Sussex (Prince Harry), 6

= The Duchess of Sussex (Meghan)

The Duke of York (Prince Andrew†), 8

The Earl of Wessex (Prince Edward†), 11

= The Countess of Wessex (Sophie)

The Princess Royal (Princess Anne†), 14

The Duke of Gloucester, 27

= The Duchess of Gloucester

The Duke of Kent, 37

= The Duchess of Kent

Princess Alexandra, 50

Prince Philip retired in 2017. Just before our analysis, Prince Andrew ‘stepped back from public duties for the foreseeable future’, and at the time of our analysis, Harry and Meghan were full-time working Royals.

There are some adult members of the Royal family (e.g., who appear on Buckingham Palace’s balcony), who are not listed as full-time working Royals and/or who do not have charity patronages. They include Princess Anne’s children, and Prince and Princess Michael of Kent.

Some other MRFs appear to have patronages but are not listed as such on the UK Royal family’s website. Both of Prince Andrew’s daughters are in this category.

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4† The Queen’s four children are, in birth order: Prince Charles, Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward. Until recently, males took precedence over females in the line of succession, which is why Princess Anne is preceded in the line of succession by her younger brothers (and their offspring).

5 Prince Andrew is still listed (at 30 June 2020) on Royal.uk as having patronages. We have used the set of his patronages as of 1 November 2019, before he stepped back.

6 At the time of writing, William and Kate were the sole full-time working MRFs in their generation. The older generations have more: Prince Charles’s generation of working MRFs includes his wife, sister, brother and sister-in-law. The Queen’s generation of working MRFs is more populous still, with the Gloucesters, the Kents (plus two other Kents who do public engagements but do not have charity patronages) and Princess Alexandra.

7 Some other MRFs appear to have patronages but are not listed as such on the UK Royal family’s website. Both of Prince Andrew’s daughters are in this category; for instance, Princess Beatrice appears to be patron of York Musical Society and The York Theatre Royal, and Princess Eugenie appears to be patron of Tate Young Patrons, https://www.tate.org.uk/press/press-releases/her-royal-highness-princess-eugenie-york-becomes-royal-patron-tate-young [Accessed 5 May 2020]
Section 1: What is a Royal patronage?

When starting this study, we asked the Palace whether it could share information on various aspects of Royal patronages such as what they involve, their intended purpose, and how they are chosen. The Palace said that all public information is on this webpage: www.royal.uk/charities-and-patronages. The webpage doesn’t answer all of these questions. In this section, we explore various features of the Royal patronage relationship.

Elements that patronages may involve

From conversations with various charities which have Royal patrons and observations in the press (general press and charity sector press), it is clear that a Royal patronage can comprise any or all of the following components – and perhaps others:

- **Public engagements.** These have various forms, including visits by the patron to the charity’s premises or activities, visits by the patron to entities or events associated with the charity or its work (e.g., Prince Charles visited High House Production Park in 2014, which is “an international centre of excellence for creative industries” in which the Royal Opera House, of which he is patron, is involved). The Palace publishes information about MRFs’ public engagements, so we analysed that.

- **Fundraising.** Royals attend some engagements where the purpose is explicitly fundraising – such as a $10,000-a-head dinner in New York attended by William and Kate to raise funds for their university. Prince Andrew was guest of honour at a reception, also in New York, to raise funds for York Minster, of whose appeal he was patron. Other events may have raising funds as a goal but less explicitly. We know from our conversations with individual charities that they hope that Royal engagement / endorsement and/or a Royal attending an event or hosting an event at a palace or castle will attract people who will support them.

- **Access to events at palaces.** Royal patrons quite often host events at Royal palaces. For instance, in March 2020, Kate hosted a dinner at Buckingham Palace to mark the 25th anniversary of The Place2Be of which she is patron. Stephen Cook, then editor of Third Sector magazine, said that Royal patronage “offers charities the opportunity to have event receptions (sic) at Buckingham Palace or Clarence House, which is very attractive, and they are often overflowing with high-profile attendees.” One of this report’s authors has been involved in such events at palaces, and noticed how easy it is to persuade people to attend them.

- **Association / endorsement.** That is, the Royal associating her / himself with the charity or the causes it promotes, with the aim of lending visibility, gravitas or credibility. Figure 2 shows an example. This may be a greater effect for less-well-known charities or causes than for those which are already prestigious, or household names. Through people we know personally in charities, we have seen the delight and pride which a Royal visit to a charity’s work can create.

- **Profile / press coverage.** The Royal website says that “Having a Royal patron or president provides vital publicity for the work of these organisations, and allows their enormous
achievements and contributions to society to be recognised.\textsuperscript{xv} Again, this benefit may be greater for some patronees than for others. When Kate became patron of the Natural History Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and National Portrait Gallery, they were already popular institutions.\textsuperscript{xvi} Press coverage can be generated by public engagements, e.g., the director of one museum with a high-profile Royal patron told us that it gets significant press coverage of (say) an exhibition launch if the patron attends.

- There are sometimes \textbf{private visits} by MRFs to charities, e.g., Meghan reportedly\textsuperscript{xvii} made private visits to the Grenfell Tower Community Kitchen.

We are not aware of any norm around \textbf{financial relationship} between Royal patrons and the patronee charities, in either direction. We understand (from many years in this sector and many unsystematic conversations) that donations from Royal patrons are rare, though not unheard of: during this project, we heard one anecdote of a donation of £1000 from the Queen to a large charity of which she is patron. It is possible of course that there is other financial support provided confidentially.

Royals rarely, if ever, become trustees of the charities of which they are patrons.

Royal patronages also appear unrelated to conventional work at the patronee charity. On the one hand, Prince William was never patron of the air ambulance by which he was employed for a while – that in East Anglia – and has not become patron of it since leaving. However, he has become patron of a different air ambulance: the one in London where he lives. On the other hand, in Sweden, Princess Sofia (wife of the King’s son), who is honorary chairman of the Sophiahemmet hospital in Stockholm, did a short training there after the Covid19 pandemic started and at the time of writing was working there as a medical assistant\textsuperscript{xviii}.

\textbf{Figure 1: Princess Sophia of Sweden}

![Princess Sofia of Sweden attends the Nobel Prize Banquet at Stockholm City Hall on December 10, 2018.](Photo credit: Getty Images)

![Princess Sofia of Sweden poses during her first day at work at the Sophiahemmet hospital in Stockholm.](Photo credit: Getty Images)
Box 2: HIV-AIDS and landmines

As we’ve been working on this project, many people have mentioned Princess Diana’s work on HIV-AIDS and landmines. Her work is widely thought to have been highly successful, in two ways. First, in changing public attitudes to people living with HIV-AIDS. This work was at a time that many people thought that HIV-AIDS could be caught from physical touch or sharing a toilet seat, and hence people living with HIV-AIDS faced fear and stigma in addition to their medical condition. Princess Diana visited people living with HIV-AIDS, and shook their hands – in front of the press – which gathered significant attention, not least because some people thought that physically dangerous. Second, her work on landmines, by walking through cleared mine-fields and meeting with people injured by mines – again in front of the cameras – brought press and public attention to those issues.

These seem strong examples of the endorsement and profile mentioned above. The fact that these examples are still much talked about 33 years later shows how striking that work is.

Princess Diana’s walk through HALO minefield, Angola 1997

Photo credit: https://www.halotrust.org/what-we-do/our-work/landmine-free-2025/

Princess Diana bonds with a young victim of land mines in Angola in 1997

Photo credit: Trinity Mirror/Mirrorpix/Alamy

Figure 2: The charity Plantlife shows off its Royal patron on an information board in Derbyshire

Photo credit: Caroline Fiennes
Does the name of the Royal patron’s role matter?

The Royal website has a list of “charities and patronages”. Its items include roles with various titles, including Patron, Honorary Patron, Member, Honorary Member, President, Honorary President, Honorary Fellow, Honorary Visitor, and in one case, Companion Rat.

It is not clear what these roles are, nor whether they are all essentially the same. This was one of the questions we asked the Palace which it did not answer.

We decided to include in our analysis only instances where the role is called Patron, Ambassador or President. Although we cannot be sure, we suspect that the other roles – e.g., honorary positions – may be different from that of patron, and hence a different intervention. For example, honorary membership or fellowship of entities is often different from non-honorary membership or fellowship of them: Prince William is Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, but not an actual Fellow, which requires a medical, dental or veterinary qualification, which he does not have. We further suspect that a patron is more involved in the organisation than is somebody holding honorary position.

Does having a Royal patronage allow a charity to use ‘Royal’ in its name?

It doesn’t seem so. Some organisations that have Royal patrons have ‘Royal’ in their name, but many organisations that have Royal patrons do not have ‘Royal’ in their name, and vice versa. Some examples are shown below. The guidance on use of Royal arms, names and images sets out that Royal consent is needed before an organisation can register a trademark “likely to lead persons to think that the applicant either has or recently has had Royal patronage”.

Figure 3: Relationship between an organisation having a Royal patron, and having ‘Royal’ in its name

Example organisations with ‘Royal’ in their name

- Royal Society of British Artists
- Royal Society of Biology
- Theatre Royal, Nottingham
- Royal Society of Mines
- Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind

Example organisations with Royal Patrons (patron)

- The Royal Lifesaving Society (The Queen)
- The Royal Opera House (Charles)
- The Royal School of Needlework (Camilla)
- The Royal Aero Club (William)
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Andrew)
- Dog’s Trust (The Queen)
- Health and Hope (Charles)
- Barnardo’s (Camilla)
- Swim England (William)
- Action for Children (Kate)
- WellChild (Harry)
- TeenTech (Andrew)
**Dosage: How much ‘patronage’ do patronees get, (why) do some patronees get more than others, and does dosage matter?**

We could analyse the number of public engagements that Royal patrons do with each charity. Data on their other activities was not available. Taking public engagements as an indication of overall involvement, we see that some patronees get much more patron activity than others. We call this ‘the dosage’. We do not know which types of support each patronee receives nor (with the exception of public engagements) how much of each they receive. Importantly for charities, it is not clear what determines the ‘dosage’ that each patronee receives, nor who determines it: that may be the charity, or it may not. In other words, it is possible that a charity seeks and acquires a Royal patron and then has no control over what that patronage comprises and hence how useful it is.

To analyse public engagements, we used the Court Circular in which the Royal family publishes a list of its engagements each day. We analysed those data (i) for all UK charity patronees for the whole of 2019, and (ii) for a set of patronees of the nine most senior MRFs, for the three years from 31 October 2016 – 1 November 2019 (chosen to be before Prince Andrew stepped back from public duties). For each patron, we used five randomly-selected patronees not founded by them, and one randomly-selected patronee which was founded by them. For Prince Andrew, we used Pitch@Palace as his founded-patronee, though it is not a charity, because he does / did so much with it and it is so closely associated with him.

The results are shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5 below. Three findings stand out.

First, the **number of engagements varies considerably.** In the three-year analysis, the number of engagements per charity varies from 201 to zero. In 2019, some patronees got dozens of public engagements, some got just a handful, most got none.

Second, **most (74%) charities with Royal patrons got no public engagements with them at all in the whole of 2019.** Though we of course appreciate that there is other work besides public engagements, it seems odd that so many patronages get no visits, given that the Royal family’s website states that “members of the Royal Family tend to limit their patronages to a manageable number to ensure that they can give each organisation a significant amount of their time.”

Third, the **charities founded by MRFs tended to get much more public engagements (higher dosage) than pre-existing charities that they take on.** In the three-year analysis, six of the nine MRFs included saw a patronee that they founded more than 35 times, whereas no pre-existing charities saw their Royal patron more than half that often (more than 17 engagements in those three years). There is one exception, in Princess Anne and Save the Children: we deliberately included this because it is mentioned often in discussions about Royal patronages. The data confirm that it is indeed an outlier. Most pre-existing patronees saw their Royal patrons much less: most saw them a handful of times in the three years, and none (except Save the Children) saw them more than 16 times.

Prince Harry’s eight engagements with WellChild in the last five years contrasts with his 35 engagements in that period with Sentebale, which he co-founded. Similarly, in the last five years, Prince William has done three engagements in his role with the Mountain Rescue Council of England and Wales, but over 120 engagements with the Royal Foundation, which he co-founded. The patronee charity which gets most Royal engagements of the entire set is the Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.
Figure 4: Frequency distribution of the number of public engagements that MRFs did with their patronee charities during 2019

- Patronees not founded by an MRF
- Patronees founded by an MRF

Total = 876
Total = 176
Total = 66

Number of Engagements in 2019

- The Royal Academy of Music
- The Royal Horticultural Society
- The Prince's Trust
- The Royal British Legion
- The Prince's Foundation
- The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- The Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

Number of Charities
Royal Patronages of UK Charities

Section 1: What is a Royal patronage?

Figure 5: Number of visits in three years by nine Royal patrons to selection of patronee charities

- The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust
- Royal Air Force Football Association
- YMCA Scotland
- Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust
- The Royal Society of Portrait Painters
- Grenfell Association of Great Britain and Ireland
- The Prince’s Trust
- The Royal Meteorological Society
- The Fdn and Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- The Britannia Association
- The British Hosta and Hemerocallis Society
- The National Hedgelaying Society
- Jamie’s Farm
- The Royal British Legion Poppy Factory
- The Foundation Years Trust
- The London Chamber Orchestra
- Fulham Palace Trust
- The Royal Fdn of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge
- Royal African Society
- Skill Force
- The British Academy of Film and Television Arts
- Tusk Trust
- Swim England
- The Royal Fdn of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge
- SportsAid
- East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices
- Natural History Museum
- Place2Be
- The Foundling Museum
- Invictus Games
- The HALO Trust
- Dolen Cymru
- MapAction
- WellChild
- The London Marathon
- Pitch@Palace*
- The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children’s Fund
- The Peter Jones Foundation
- Baker Dearing Educational Trust
- Sound Seekers
- Army Rifle Association
- Animal Health Trust
- Sense Scotland
- Swinfen Telemedicine
- The Royal Signals Association
- The Unicorn Preservation Society
- Save the Children
- The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Fdn**
- The National Youth Jazz Orchestra
- The London Mozart Players Trust
- Edinburgh International Festival
- The Royal Yacht Squadron Isle of Wight Foundation
- Queen’s Club
- The Royal Fdn of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge
- Royal African Society
- Skill Force
- The British Academy of Film and Television Arts
- Tusk Trust
- Swim England
- The Royal Fdn of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge
- SportsAid
- East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices
- Natural History Museum
- Place2Be
- The Foundling Museum
- Invictus Games
- The HALO Trust
- Dolen Cymru
- MapAction
- WellChild
- The London Marathon
- Pitch@Palace*
- The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children’s Fund
- The Peter Jones Foundation
- Baker Dearing Educational Trust
- Sound Seekers
- Army Rifle Association
- Animal Health Trust
- Sense Scotland
- Swinfen Telemedicine
- The Royal Signals Association
- The Unicorn Preservation Society
- Save the Children
- The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Fdn**
- The National Youth Jazz Orchestra
- The London Mozart Players Trust
- Edinburgh International Festival
- The Royal Yacht Squadron Isle of Wight Foundation
- Queen’s Club

Patronees not founded by an MRF
Patronees founded by an MRF

* Not a registered charity  ** Founded by the Duke of Edinburgh

8 The Grenfell Association of GB and Ireland, of which the Queen is patron, is nothing to do with Grenfell Tower, a tower block in west London which had a terrible fire in 2017.
Again, we looked at the full set of Royal public engagements in 2019. We found that, though charities founded by an MRF are only 2% of all charities with Royal patrons, they get 36% of MRFs’ public engagements with charities, as shown below.

**Figure 6: Royal patrons do disproportionately many engagements with charities that are founded by a Royal than with patronee charities that are not founded by a Royal**
Section 2: Which charities have Royal patronages?

How do Royals select their patronee charities? What is the process, and what are the criteria?

We don’t know. This was one of the questions that we asked the Palace, which it did not directly answer. On selection criteria, the UK Royal family’s website states that these include “that the organisation is reputable and well-established and has a good financial track record.” It says that other selection criteria may include the MRF’s interest, and/or the geography of their title. On selection process, the UK Royal family’s website states that some charities apply, and others are chosen by the MRF upon hearing about them.xxiv The Times in May 2020xxv cited the (then) director of the Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge implying that Royals “take[s] on patronages of every charity that asks”. (See Figure 7.)

Figure 7: The Times excerpt, 30 May 2020

For comparison, the Norwegian Royal family publishes the objectives, selection criteria and intended duration of its patronages (in English). It also states that patronages are intended to have a finite duration, of five years.xxvi

The process in the UK Royal family is sometimes hereditary: there are some organisations for which the Monarch is automatically patron. The Royal Society is one. The Queen took on many charity patronages on her accession to the throne in 1952: they include The Royal Society of Portrait Painters, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, The Royal Society for Blind Children, The Royal College of Organists, the Royal Society of Sculptors, the Royal Variety Charity, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). She later inherited a few from her motherxxvii.

The optimal criteria and process would follow from the intended purpose(s) of patronages. For example, if the intended purpose is:

- To highlight best practice: then the criteria / process would be to find the best charities (in a particular sector).
- To improve outcomes for beneficiaries: then the criteria / process might be to find where improvement is most needed or most likely. Those might be charities that are already
doing well, or might be ones with new leadership capable of making major changes. It
might be charities most poised for growth.

- To raise funds: then the criteria / process might be to find charities which are severely
under-funded: perhaps, those for whom demand and resources are most out of balance.

Professor Cathy Pharoah of the Business School at City University†, London sees Royal patronage
of a charity as “an endorsement that their work is reputable and high quality”. It seems more likely
that they are an indication of reputation (what others think of the charity) than of quality. Judging a
charity’s quality (importance and effectiveness) can be hard because it is rare to find comparable
and rigorous evaluations of charities’ effectiveness - within a sector, let alone across sectors. This
creates a large need for such research: we have written about this amply elsewhere. It is therefore
not clear what reliable indicators of quality the Royal family is using, or could use. Moreover, the
geographic distribution of patronee charities (detailed later) suggests that the selection process is
dominated by proximity to where the MRFs live and/or the geography of their title - which arise from
history. For example, of the 17 air ambulances in the UKxxx, the four with Royal patrons are all close
to where their Royal patrons live or have their title. It seems unlikely that this reflects quality rather
than history and geography.

Table 2: Royal patronages of air ambulances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air Ambulance</th>
<th>Patron</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cornwall Air Ambulance</td>
<td>Camilla, who is The Duchess of Cornwall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London’s Air Ambulance Charity</td>
<td>Prince William, who lives in London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire Air Ambulance</td>
<td>Camilla, who has a home in neighbouring Gloucestershire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire Air Ambulance</td>
<td>Prince Andrew, who is Duke of York</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Box 3: It was difficult to work out which Royal is patron of what

The Palace website (Royal.uk) has a section about ‘charities and patronages’ which contains
information about each Royal patronage. As mentioned, this includes a fair number of parts
of the military, private clubs, etc. Given that some patronages are of charities and some
are not, the distinction between ‘charities and patronages’ is not clear. The information
published by the Palace is not in a format that is easy to sort to isolate the charities, so we
did this manually. This was difficult because of problems with the published data.

First, the list of ‘charities and patronages’ published by Buckingham Palace is not
consistent with the lists published by various Royals on their own websites. For example:
around 20 patronages of Prince Charles listed on his website (princeofwales.gov.uk) were
not listed on Royal.uk. Conversely, we found two patronages of his listed on Royal.uk that
were not on his website. We found three patronages of the Duchess of Cornwall listed on
her website (princeofwales.gov.uk) but not listed on Royal.uk. At the time of our research††,
Prince Andrew also had a separate website (thedukeofyork.org). We found nine patronages

† which, at the time of publication, is being renamed because of links between its former name and the slave trade.
†† thedukeofyork.org now points to a new section on Royal.uk. The information about the various Royal websites in this report
was correct at the time of our research, in early 2020.
listed for him on there but not listed on Royal.uk; and we found 22 patronages listed for him on Royal.uk but not on thedukeofyork.org.

Second, the lists are incomplete. For example, Prince Harry is patron of the Halo Trust, and has been since 2013, but that is not among the list of his patronages on Royal.uk. The Royal website sometimes lists an MRF as ‘joint patron’ (with another MRF) but does not say who the other MRF is.

Third, some patronees listed could not be identified from the name on the Royal website. An example is that Prince Charles is listed as Colonel In Chief of the 1st The Queen’s Dragoon Guards: that has a trust with a registered charity number, but it is also listed on the Army website as part of the Armyxxx, so we could not establish which entity is the patronee. Equally, Prince Charles’ website says that he is patron of “The Garden Society” but we could not identify which organisation this is: many organisations have that name, or nearly that name. We asked the Palace to clarify such instances, but because it did not answer, we have excluded all charities with unclear names from our analysis.

Fourth, some data on Royal.uk are wrong. For example:

- For one of Prince Harry’s patronages, the weblink given on Royal.uk went not to a charity but to a porn site. This has now been corrected on Royal.uk: we pointed out the error on Twitter, and ten days later, The Sun reported it as an “exclusive”xxxii.

- The list of Prince Andrew’s patronages on Royal.uk included (at the time of our analysis, January 2020) the NSPCC’s Full Stop Campaign. That campaign ended in 2009. We asked NSPCC, who said that he was patron of that campaign only, that they have had no contact with him since 2009, and that they have asked Buckingham Palace to remove that entry.

Fifth, there are some ‘naming issues’. Some patronages have different names on the various Royal websites, and are often also different from the charity’s registered name. This made it difficult for us to establish if some patronages were really present on both websites and were actually referring to the same establishment. Some examples of this are:

- Prince Charles’ website lists him as patron of ‘The Reserve Forces Ulysses Trust’ whereas the Royal.uk site lists him as patron of ‘Ulysses Trust’. We think that these are the same thing, but cannot be totally sure.

- Similarly, the Royal website lists Prince Andrew as patron of The Duke of York’s Sports Foundation whereas his own website lists The Duke of York Young Champions’ Trophy. We think that these are the same thing.

Sixth, there are 28 organisations listed on Royal.uk as having a Royal patron, but no Royal patron is specified. In most case, these charities’ patrons seem (from internet searches) to be Prince Andrew’s daughters - Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie. Given this, we were unsure as to whether to count them: we eventually did. We included them and their patronages in our analysis of all Royal patronees.
How many patronees, and patronee charities, do the Royals have?

We believe that UK Royals are patrons of 2862 organisations. Of those, the vast majority (2549) have a single patron, whilst some (312) have multiple Royal patrons and for one (British Fashion Council) we could not identify the Royal patron. Patronees with multiple MRFs include: the Scout Association, of which the Queen is Patron and the Duke of Kent is President; and The Royal Bath and West of England Society, of which the Queen is Patron, and Prince Philip, Prince Charles, Princess Anne, Sophie, and the Duke of Gloucester are all Vice Patrons.

We believe that UK Royals are collectively patrons of 1187 UK registered charities.

Types of entity of which the various Royals are patrons

UK Royals also have patronages of many non-charitable entities, e.g., cities, parts of the military, non-charitable non-profits. For example, Kate is patron of the V&A Museum, which is not a registered charity but rather a non-departmental public body, and Prince Andrew is a founder of Pitch@Palace which is a community interest company rather than a charity. So even once we had a defensible list of which Royal was patron of what, we had to isolate the patronees which are UK registered charities, as this is our field of interest. This was not trivial: it took about six person-weeks. The data about patronages on Royal.uk is not in a downloadable format, so we scraped it (using a computer code) and compared that list with the set of charities registered with the UK’s three charity regulators. One implication is that the numbers sometimes cited in the press about the number of charities of which various Royals are patrons are almost certainly wrong.

Of the 2549 patronees with a single patron, a little under half (1064) are UK registered charities. The chart below shows the number of charity and non-charity patronages of each Royal (as of December 2019, when the data were obtained from the Royal.uk website). A further 123 UK-registered charities have multiple MRFs, giving a total of 1187 patronee UK registered charities.

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9 These numbers are subject to our caveat given earlier about uncertainty because of problems with the Royal data.
10 The method and data sources are explained in the Methods section, as are the method and data sources for all data in this report.
11 The UK has three charity regulators: one for England and Wales, one for Scotland and one for Northern Ireland
Section 2: Which charities have Royal patronages?

We analysed the set of UK charities which have Royal patrons to discover their distribution by (a) sector (e.g., health, education), (b) geographical region of the UK, and (c) size, as indicated by revenue. In each case, we look at the distribution of patronees, and also that distribution compared to the population as a whole. These data are for all UK Royals who have charity patronages, except Prince Philip because he had retired by the time of our analysis. They include only patronages where the role is called Patron, President or Ambassador: this is because we wanted a set of comparable interventions, and it seemed likely that roles with other titles (e.g., honorary roles) might denote a different type of involvement and hence different intervention.
1. Sector: Distribution by sector of patronee charities vs the whole UK charity sector

The sector classifications here are those of the International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (ICNPO, explained in the Methods section. ‘N/A’ is where a charity does not have an ICNPO category.)

Culture, sport, social services, and education are the sectors with most patronees. Figure 9 below shows that 24% of charity patronees are in culture and sport; 21% in social services, etc.

Note that Figure 9 shows a count of the charities – hence using the term ‘patronee’. It is not a count of patronages, because one charity may have multiple Royal patrons. For instance, four Royals are associated with the Royal Society of Edinburgh: in our count of patronees, it is only counted once.

Figure 9: Number of patronee charities by sector

We then compared this sectoral distribution of patronee charities with that of the UK charity sector as a whole. The graph below shows that the category of ‘religion’ is ‘under-patroned’: it has 17% of all UK charities, but only 5% of charities with Royal patrons, so is ‘under-patroned’ by 12% (percentage points). Conversely, ‘culture and sport’ is 11% of all UK registered charities, but has 25% of the Royal charity patronees, so is ‘over-patroned’ by 13 percentage points.

As mentioned, the margins by which some sectors are over- and under-patroned are quite sizable – as they are also for geography, discussed below. They are well outside what one might call a natural margin of error. It is not clear whether these distributions are intentional.
It is perhaps surprising that religion is so ‘under-patroned’ given that the Monarch is the ‘Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England’xxxiii. It may be because many individual churches and other places of worship are registered as separate charities, or because the Queen’s role means the Royals think that further involvement with Christian churches is not needed, and potentially awkward for other faiths12, xxxiv.

Nonetheless, it is striking that the most ‘over-patroned’ sectors – environment and animals13, and culture and sport – are fairly uncontroversial, much less so than some which are ‘under-patroned’ such as social services (much of which are statutory services delivered under contract to local authorities) and housing. Housing is controversial in the UK for many reasons. The quality of a person's housing is linked to inherited wealthxxxv, and also to many important life-outcomes: it is a major social determinant of health, for examplexxxvi.

2. Geography: Distribution by geography of patronee charities vs the UK population

The greatest prevalence of patronee charities is in London, South East, and South West, as shown in Figure 11 below. This may be due to proximity to the Royals’ main homes and hence convenience, and the geography of their titles. All the Royals who have charity patronages have homes in London, the South East and the South West14. Their aristocratic ties are mainly to the South East and West: Prince Charles is Duke of Cornwall in the South West. Prince Harry is Duke of Sussex in the South East, as do Prince Harry, Meghan, Prince Edward and Sophie. All the other MRFs who have charity patronages live in Kensington Palace in central London (William, Kate, the Kents, Gloucesters and Princess Alexandra).

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12 As an aside, ‘religious organisations’ is the cause which gets more donations in the UK than any other - at 19% of all giving, according to a CAF survey in 2019.
13 Many more of which are things like the Dogs Trust, The Welsh Pony and Cob Society and The Poultry Club of Great Britain, than are about controversial environmental issues such as climate change.
14 Obviously, the Queen’s main residence is in central London. The Prince of Wales and Camilla similarly, and they have a house in Gloucestershire (in the South West), as does Princess Anne. Prince Andrew has a house in Windsor (in the South East), as do Prince Harry, Meghan, Prince Edward and Sophie. All the other MRFs who have charity patronages live in Kensington Palace in central London (William, Kate, the Kents, Gloucesters and Princess Alexandra).
East, and Prince Edward is the Earl of Wessex, a historical region which is no longer an administrative region but is in the South of England.

Convenience of visiting seems a surprising criterion, given that, as discussed, so many patronees (74%) got no engagements in a whole year.

A surprise was that Wales had so few patronages. The heir to the throne has been the Prince of Wales for centuries, and Prince Charles became Prince of Wales when he was nine years old, now 61 years ago. William and Kate lived there before their marriage.

**Figure 11: Geographical split of patronee charities**

![Geographical split of patronee charities](chart)

We then compared the distribution of patronee charities with that of the UK population. London and the South East have far more than their ‘fair share’ of patronee charities: London has 40% of all charities with Royal patrons but only 12% of the UK population. So, London is ‘over-patroned’ by 28 percentage points. Conversely, the North West has 11% of UK the population but only 3% of all charities with Royal patrons, so it is ‘under-patroned’ by 8.5 percentage points.

This is not simply the skew because so many national (and international) charities are head-quartered in London. Even taking that into account, London remains ‘over-patroned’: London has 40% of all charities with Royal patronages despite being home to ‘only’ 18% of UK registered charities. All other English regions are ‘under-patroned’, as are Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

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15 Our population data here are based on the number of registered voters in each Parliamentary constituency, using data from 2017.
Figure 12: Geographical split of patronee charities compared with that of the UK population

The ‘over-patroned’ regions of London, the South East, and South West are not where social need is greatest. London, which has by far the most Royal patronages per capita, is a special case: although it has the highest proportion of inhabitants in poverty of any UK region (28%)xxxviii, it is the most economically unequal region in the UKxxxix, with some of the richest neighbourhoods alongside some of the poorest.

The South East and South West, which follow London in their number of Royal patronages per capita, have relatively few people in poverty: after Northern Ireland which has the lowest proportion of inhabitants in poverty (18%), the South East and South West have the next lowest proportion, both with 19%. That difference between 18% and 19% may well be within the confidence interval for those data.

The North West has fewest Royal patronages per capita, and the second-highest proportion of inhabitants in poverty (23%)xl.

3. Size: Distribution by size of patronee charities vs charities in general

Charities which have Royal patrons are large: much larger, on average, than charities in general. For our indicator of size, we used revenue – specifically in the most recent filing with the Charity Commission for England and Wales: hence the data in this section refer only to charities in England and Wales.

On average, charities which have Royal patrons have an average annual revenue of £14.3 million, nearly 30 times larger than the average revenue of all charities, which is just over £0.5 million16. The charities with multiple Royal patrons are particularly large, with an average revenue of over £40 million, putting them in the top 0.15% of charities by revenue.

16 Some 9,000 charities report having no revenue at all in their most recent accounts. This makes little difference to our maths here: the average revenue of the charities which do have revenue is £535,515.
There is a large variation in the size of charities patronised by the various Royals. For Prince William, the average figure is £22 million, whereas for his brother Harry, it is only a fourteenth of that, at £1.6 million. Sometimes the husband’s patronees are much larger than his wife’s (William and Kate, for example), other times it is the opposite (Edward and Sophie, for example).

**Figure 13: Average income of charities in England and Wales by Royal patron, vs average income of UK charities**
Section 3: What difference do Royal patronages make to charities?

Our analysis treats Royal patronages as an intervention in the life of a charity, and attempts to identify its effect. We needed to decide the outcomes to analyse (i.e., to identify the effect of that intervention on that outcome). Hence we needed to ascertain the outcomes which Royal patronages are intended to benefit.

What are the intended outcomes of a Royal patronage?

We don’t know for sure. This was also among the questions that we asked of the Palace. The Royal website says that a Royal patron or president “provides vital publicity for the work of these organisations, and allows their enormous achievements and contributions to society to be recognised.”xli We have heard charities recount various other benefits of Royal patronages / Royal involvement. In 2016, charities of which the Queen is patron were invited to ‘The Patron’s Lunch’ event at the Mall. They were surveyed a few months later, and the resulting reportxlii cites various benefits that they feel that they have received from the patronage. (It mainly does not say how many respondents cited each benefit.) Both of these sets are outlined in Box 4 below. Academic Frank Prochaska argues in his book Royal Bounty that the UK Royal family has “forged a new and popular role for itself as patron, promoter, and fund-raiser for the underprivileged and the deserving.”xliii

It is possible that the intended outcome is determined by the charity rather than by the Royal. It is also possible that the MRF and the charity have quite different ideas about the goal(s).

The goals / benefits of Royal patronage that we have encountered are explored in Box 4 below:

Box 4: Some reported benefits of Royal patrons / Royal involvement in charities

The following are some anonymised situations that we have heard or seen recounted. There may be others:

- **Access.** A charity took its Royal patron on a visit overseas, and because they had “an ACTUAL Royal” (their words), they were able to get meetings with politicians and civil servants of a seniority that had been unthinkable previously.

- **Endorsement / moral support.** The Patron’s Lunch report talks about the Queen’s patronage bringing “credibility, status, pride… a badge of integrity”. See the example below in terms of the prominence with which the London Taxi Drivers’ Charity for Children announces its Royal patron on its ‘About Us’ page.

- **Recognition / morale.** It’s fair to say that much charity work is rather uncelebrated and unglamorous: it involves dealing with funding applications, or with people who are poor, marginalised, chaotic, endangered and sometimes dangerous. A visit – and the
attention—of a Royal person, and/or an event in a palace or castle, can make workers feel valued by society and more motivated. It can be a means of recognising and thanking volunteers, donors and staff.

- **Fundraising.** This is consistent with the comment from the director of the Royal Foundation in Figure 7, which implies that raising revenue is one goal. The Patron’s Lunch report quotes charities saying that the Queen’s patronage eases fundraising because it brings trust. It has a specific example: “The Seashell Trust said that the recent raising of £8 million from trusts and philanthropists was directly related to their patronage, ‘because they know that The Queen has strong associations with successful and well managed charities’.”

- **An effect on performance.** The Patron’s Lunch report states that “The Queen’s patronage in many cases asserts certain standards and drives charities to a higher standard of integrity and charitable achievement”. It cites “interviewees [citing] feeling the need to be fit to be associated with The Queen.” (This claim of an effect on standards does not appear to have been tested empirically.)

- **Beneficiary-related benefits.** For example, ill children in a hospice (and their families) may be cheered by a Royal visit.

- **Network amongst other charities.** An illustration is from East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices, in its own words below.

- **Recruitment of members and promotion of the cause.** The Scouts Association said in 2017 that the Queen’s own dedication to community service “inspires the next generation of 573,000 UK members to a lifetime of service and volunteering”xliv. The Patron’s Lunch report cites the Queen’s patronage of Lepra and her “personal interaction with those with leprosy...[as having] helped break down longstanding stigmas: ‘showing a lack of fear and prejudice set an example to the world’.”

- **Press and attention for the charity and/or cause.** This may be useful for attracting funds, and/or for raising awareness of a social / environmental issue. The work of Diana, Princess of Wales on HIV-AIDS or of William, Harry, Kate and Meghan on mental health could be placed in this category. Clearly Royal visits can (but do not always) generate press attention. The Patron’s Lunch report found that most (81%) respondents “were aware of the permanently available ‘hook’ [which] The Queen’s patronage provides” for external and social media, and their own communications.

- **Convening / connecting with other charities or activists** in their sector / getting access to decision-makers. This is sometimes related to profile. For example, Prince Charles spoke to grocery retailers in 2009 about improving environmental sustainability, through addressing IGD, “a charity at the heart of the food and grocery industry”xlv. This is clearly in line with his interest in sustainability issues and involvement with many charities working on that.
East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices

“Thanks to the Duchess of Cambridge we have also been able to make contact with a hospice in Malaysia, whom we hope to work with to develop services and share best practice. This relationship follows a visit to Hospis Malaysia in September 2012 as part of a tour by The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Singapore, Malaysia, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu in celebration of The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.

In April 2014, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visited New Zealand and Australia where they met with Gabrielle and Paul Quilliam; co-founders of the charity Queensland Kids which is working to open Hummingbird House – a children’s hospice for Queensland. In August 2014 EACH entered into an International Children’s Palliative Care Network twinning agreement with Queensland Kids to support the start-up phase of Hummingbird House, offering advice on organisational structure and the development of their model of care, staff training and charity shop strategy. You can see more about these two relationships in Our Friends Overseas page.”

The outcome that we analysed: revenue

We were open to analysing any outcome(s) that were suitable. We needed outcomes for which:

- Objective data are available for a large range of charities: both patronee charities and non-patronee charities which could serve as comparators
- The data are comparable across charities with diverse activities and goals
- The data are usable

Of the potential outcomes listed above, that only means revenue and press coverage.

Other potential outcomes would have been impossible for our analysis because they are unobservable to the outsider. **Staff morale** was not a usable outcome because few if any charities report anything about staff morale (or even staff turnover, which morale might affect). **Benefits to the
charities’ beneficiaries are also normally unobservable externally as few charities report beneficiary outcomes. Also, the set of charities is hugely diverse and hence any beneficiary outcomes reported across the set would likely be incomparable, and hence unusable for our purposes.

We were keen to include a second outcome alongside revenue because of the obvious limitations of using just money. We considered using media profile as an outcome – and did start work on it – but eventually abandoned it because of two problems. First, the difficulty of disentangling positive coverage from negative coverage. We would have had to use a count of media mentions, which is possible but does not distinguish between positive and negative media coverage. And second, much press coverage is totally irrelevant to the patronage. For example, Oxfam got masses of media attention over the sexual misconduct allegations in Haiti, as did KidsCompany when it was collapsing, and York Minster (with which Prince Andrew is / was involved) when it caught fire in 1984, and the Glasgow School of Art (of which Prince Charles is patron) when it caught fire in both 2014 and 2018. Such media coverage obviously indicates nothing about the value of a Royal patronage. Investigating the relevance and sentiment (positive vs negative) of each piece of media coverage would have been prohibitively laborious.

We used revenue, because it has the benefits of being: reported by all registered charities; reported to a regulator, and hence presumably credible; and reported annually.

We of course recognise that charities exist to do more than attract funds, and that their success and effectiveness is not evident from just their financial data.

Findings about the effect of Royal patronages, in summary

We tried several methods to investigate the effect of patronages. Two things happened. First, you can see by inspection of Figures 14-18 that charities’ revenue jumps around a lot, and that they move independently of each other (i.e., they don’t all rise simultaneously). You can also see that nothing much happens to a charity’s revenue when a patronage starts. That alone indicates that Royal patrons have no conspicuous effect on charity revenue. Second, since some small but important phenomena are not visible to the naked eye, we ran various statistical analyses. Because of the nature of the data, these mainly returned results that were either miles below statistical significance, or were implausible. For example, one analysis gave the result that the revenue of the Royal Opera House (a patron) is 3.5 billion times higher than that of its comparators. This lack of sensible findings does not reflect a weakness in our data or analysis, but rather an unavoidable feature of charities’ revenue. We were keen to find an effect if there is one, but conversely did not want to torture the data into apparently showing an effect that is not really there. We are of course aware that correlation does not prove causation.

Hence, the headline finding is that we could not identify the precise effect of Royal patronages on charities’ revenue, though there are some indications that it is normally small or nil. There is probably a range of effects, but UK charities should not seek or retain Royal patrons thinking that they will bring them money.

Basic observation of the data suggests that Royal patronages have limited or no effect

Our analysis was complicated and is described in the appendix, but a good starting point is simply to look at the revenue of charities which get patronages and compare it to that of charities which
are similar but do not get patronages. Some air ambulances started Royal patronages during the period of our financial data and most did not. In Figure 14 below, we show the revenue of those which did (in red) versus that of those that did not. (Air ambulances are one of several sets of ‘natural comparators’ that we used in our analysis.) In Figure 15, we do the same for children’s hospices\(^\text{17}\), some of which also started Royal patronages during the period of our financial data and most did not. The graphs for the other groups are similar.

These graphs indicate (but do not prove) that nothing very spectacular happens to charities’ revenue after a patronage starts. Any effect of Royal patronages on the revenues of patronee charities in those groups seems small or nil.

**Figure 14:** Revenue of all UK air ambulances since 1994, showing (in red) Prince Andrew’s patronage of the Yorkshire Air Ambulance

![Figure 14](image1.png)

**Figure 15:** Revenue of all UK children’s hospices since 1994, including (in red) those with Royal patronages

![Figure 15](image2.png)

We repeated this for other groups of charities. We used the International Classification of Non Profit Organisations (ICNPO), developed by Johns Hopkins University. This divides charities into 12 broad ‘groups’, such as health, education, etc., and also into 40 finer categories called ‘descriptions’ which are sub-sets of groups. For example, the group ‘health’ comprises five ‘descriptions’ which include ‘hospitals and rehabilitation’ and ‘nursing homes’. NCVO had categorised all UK charities.

\(^{17}\) We do not show the data for the other sets of ‘natural comparators’ simply because there are too few charities in them or which gain patronages in our period to be insightful.
into their ICNPO group and description. For each patronee charity, we used as comparators the other charities which share its ICNPO description. (We did not use ‘groups’ for this because they are too heterogeneous to be useful.) Figures 16-18 below show the results for a few comparator sets, again showing the revenue of charities which get a Royal patronage with those that do not. Again, nothing much happens to their revenue in any of these sets (or the other ones, not shown here) when charities gain a Royal patron.

**Figure 16: Revenue since 1994 of all UK charities in ICNPO description ‘housing’ (defined in Methods section), including (in red) those with Royal patronages**

*There is a patronee red line quite low on this graph, and rather hard to see.*

**Figure 17: Revenue since 1994 of all UK charities in ICNPO description ‘higher education’, including (in red) those with Royal patronages**
The analytical methods we used, and why we could not accurately judge the effect of Royal patrons on revenue

These analyses are somewhat complicated.

Identifying the effect of an intervention (of which Royal patronages is an example) involves comparing what happened with that intervention with what would have happened anyway, without that intervention. This is called the counterfactual.

The best way to identify the effect of an intervention is a randomised controlled trial with a decent sample size. For example, to identify the effect of antimicrobial bednets on incidence of malaria, researchers might take a set of villages, randomly divide them into two groups, give bednets to one group and not to the other, and then measure the incidence of malaria in the two groups over time. The random division into the two groups would ensure that the two groups were identical in all respects except having the bednets, so we can be reasonably confident that any differences that we see in incidence of malaria is due to the bednets.

We could not do a randomised controlled trial here so tried two good alternatives, which can be used with historical data (i.e., doing a retrospective analysis, rather than a prospective experiment such as a randomised controlled trial).

1. Synthetic comparator method

One method is to construct our own comparator set: a synthetic comparator. Now, the reliability of the estimate of the intervention’s effect relies on the counterfactual being close to the reality: if some other factor differed before the intervention between the two groups (perhaps one group of villages is nearer a lake which gets more mosquitoes in summer), then we cannot be sure that the apparent effect of the nets was really due to the nets because it might have been due (in whole or in part) to the other factor.
We were analysing revenue. Ideally, for each patronee charity, we would find a comparator charity whose revenue pre-patronage tracks that of the charity that eventually gets a patronage, is similar in other key respects, and does not get a patronage. In most cases, this is impossible. So we construct a comparator. In one instance, we were interested in making a comparator for Yorkshire Air Ambulance, which does get a patronage. A third-party algorithm\textsuperscript{xlvii} looks at the data for comparable charities (e.g., all the air ambulances which do not get a patronage) and constructs a weighted set of them, such that the revenue pre-patronage tracks that of the Yorkshire Air Ambulance. It then compares, after the patronage has started, the revenue of the patronee charity with that of the synthetic comparator, i.e., of that weighted set of air ambulances.

We did this in two ways. First, for natural comparators (i.e., synthesising a comparator from within the sets of natural comparators that we had defined, e.g., air ambulances, sports associations.) We were able to do this analysis for six patronees (i.e., only six of the set we found had enough revenue data both before and after the patronage started): Barnardo's, Yorkshire Air Ambulance, The Children's Hospice South West, English Schools Swimming Association, SportsAid, and East Anglia's Children's Hospices.

Second, using the sets of charities which share their ICNPO description. This synthetic comparator method gives a good estimate of the effect if (and only if) the weighting from the pre-patronage period captures underlying enduring similarities. Unfortunately, that is not the case for patronee charities. This is for three reasons.

First, charities’ revenue is very jumpy. This is clear from Figures 14-18 above. That creates a lot of noise in the data, and since the purpose of this analysis is to distinguish between ‘signal’ (the effect of patronages) and noise, that is a problem: there can be so much noise that the signal is completely drowned out. To speak more precisely, this jumpiness increases the uncertainty in the results.

The second reason is related, in that the correlation between the revenue of charities even in the same natural comparator sets or ICNPO description sets is low: they bounce around rather independently (apart from the general upward trend of inflation)\textsuperscript{18}. This is evident in, for example, the graphs above of revenue of housing charities and nursing homes. One natural history museum might have a hugely successful and lucrative exhibition, or get a big legacy, quite independently of what other natural history museums do. This means that it is not possible to make a reliable synthetic comparator: it is not possible to make a synthetic comparator whose revenue pre-patronage reliably tracks that of a charity which does get a patronage. In other words, the synthetic comparator does not capture underlying and enduring similarities, and hence is not a terribly good counterfactual.

Third, there is some indication in the data that charities that get patronages are ones whose revenue grows faster than that of their comparator sets. This implication does not reach the conventional threshold for statistical significance\textsuperscript{19}, so we cannot be sure. If it is true that patronees’ revenue is

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\textsuperscript{18} To be clear, this jumpiness is just a feature of the world. Some of the analysis in this report was impeded by solvable problems with quality and usability of the data. That is not the problem here. Rather, the revenue data are perfectly clear and reliable (they were reported to a regulator), but happen to be jumpy. Sometimes this is because of bequests, which may be unforeseen and the charity rarely has any control of them, or even warning. Another cause of jumpy revenue is the unpredictability of fundraising activity. An example is the massive income to the ALS Association (a US charity) from the Ice Bucket Challenge in 2014, which vastly exceeded expectations and had very little to do with the ALS Association's core work. Hence charities’ revenue move somewhat independently to each other.

\textsuperscript{19} Statistical significance is judged (somewhat controversially) by p value, which is, roughly speaking, the chance of getting the observed result even if the effect is not there. By convention, a result is deemed statistically significant if the p value is below 0.05. We did two tests of whether patronees’ revenue grows faster than that of non-patronees. First we compared the change in their income (i.e., gradient of the line on a graph of time vs revenue). This correlation has a p-value of 0.17. Second, we compared the change in log income. This correlation has a p-value of 0.11.
growing faster than that of non-patronees anyway, that further reduces the similarity between the
patronees and their comparator sets and hence the reliability of estimates of the patronages’ effect^{20}.

Given these issues, it was hardly surprising that some of the results are not credible. For one of
the charities where we could construct a synthetic comparator from the natural comparators,
Barnardo’s, the analysis indicates that, by seven years after the patronage starts^{21}, its revenue is
six-times greater than that of the synthetic comparator. This simply does not accord with its revenue
data. For another, the English Schools Swimming Association, the analysis suggests that its income
has fallen by fully 98% relative to its synthetic control after six years. This too does not accord with
the data – even if we allow for the uncertainty around these numbers.

The magnitudes are even worse when we use the ICNPO descriptions as comparators. For the
Royal Opera House, the analysis implies that its revenue has grown by a factor of 3.5 billion relative
to its comparator, which is also patently not true.

Figure 19 below shows the results from the synthetic comparator analysis using natural comparators.
Each line shows the revenue of one of those six patronees relative to that of the synthetic comparator
made from its comparator set (e.g., the revenue of The Children’s Hospice South West compared to
that of a comparator made from weighting other children’s hospices). The patronages all start in Year
0 (y0), and the data are for the few years before and after that. The y-axis (att = average treatment
effect on the treated) is the difference between the natural log of the income of the patronised
charity and that charity’s “synthetic control” charity, which, as mentioned, is a weighted average of
natural comparators. (In other words, y=2, that means a ratio of e^2, where e is the base of the natural
logarithm = 2.71828).

The graph for synthetic comparators using ICNPO descriptions looks broadly similar, except that the
outliers are much more pronounced: one rises by a factor of about 71 billion (y= ~25), and one falls
to y= minus 90, which would equate to zero revenue, neither of which is credible.

There are a few things to notice about this graph below. First, ideally, the lines before Year 0 should
all be at zero (flat, on the axis): i.e., the synthetic comparator revenue should perfectly track the
revenue of the charity that gets the patronage. They are not. This arises from the jumpiness and
lack of correlation between the charities’ revenue, which creates uncertainty in all these data, and
suggests that the method will not produce reliable answers.

Second, there is no clear trend. The patronees’ fortunes relative to their comparator sets after the
patronage vary widely: one (Barnardo’s) rises dramatically, whilst another (the English Schools
Swimming Association) falls even more dramatically. For others, they stay around zero (meaning
that their revenue does not diverge from that of comparable charities without Royal patronages).

Third, the ‘average’ effect seems about nil: the horizontal mid-point of the six lines is about the same
a few years after the patronages start as it was beforehand.

Possible interpretations include: (i) these statistical analyses are telling us nothing useful, (ii) other
differences emerge at around the same time as the patronage starts, (iii) charities should beware
because, though a Royal patronage might significantly increase their revenue, it might just as likely
decrease it, or (iv) Royal patronages have, on about average, no effect.

^{20} As mentioned, the Palace says that its criteria for selecting patronees include “that the organisation is reputable and well-
established and has a good financial track record.” That does not equate to having fast-growing revenue.

^{21} Meaning, when Camilla became President of Barnardo’s in 2007. The Queen was already Patron, having taken that on in
1983: a role that she handed over to Camilla in 2016.
Section 3: What difference do Royal patronages make to charities?

2. Two-way fixed effects model

A two-way fixed effects analysis compares one set of data (e.g., revenue of charities that have patronages) with another (e.g., revenue of charities that don’t), and controls for:

i. changes that affect all charities during a particular year, e.g., maybe a recession reduces the revenue of all charities in, say, 2008 (this is a ‘time-fixed effect’). In other words, does anything happen to the patronee (say, the East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices of which Kate is patron) after the patronage started, that didn’t also happen to all comparable charities?

ii. characteristics of the data for each charity, e.g., allows for the fact that the revenue of some charities starts and remains higher than that of others (this is a ‘charity-fixed effect’).

We did these analyses using: income; change in income; and change in log income.

Again, these methods were compromised by the jumpiness of charities’ revenue and their independence from each other. In short, with jumpy and uncorrelated data, we could not confidently identify anything happening to one entity which is not happening to the others or which did not happen at other times.

The results were all well below statistical significance, had huge confidence intervals (standard errors: in one case the standard error was more than 400 times larger than the apparent effect size) and/or were clearly implausible.

Hence we concluded that we could not identify the precise effect of Royal patronages on charities’ revenue. However, as mentioned, the graphs earlier imply that their effect is small or nil.
Section 4: Does Royalty encourage generosity?

We could find no evidence that it does.

There is some disagreement about the value of Royal involvement with charities. On one hand is an argument that the UK Royal family’s involvement with charities encourages charitable activity, civil society, and civic activism. For example, a survey of charities of which the Queen is patron states that “the Queen’s patronage is an exemplar of dedicated volunteerism” which “has inspired many [people] across her charities and beyond”. A counterargument is that Royal involvement undermines charities and charitable activity. Owen Barder, a development economist, believes that “The Royal Family buttress their position with unearned symbols of achievement. They accept posts as Chancellors of universities, debasing the currency of academic merit. They appoint themselves to top military ranks and medals that they have not earned, belittling the work of true military professionals and the memory of those who made genuine sacrifices. They allow themselves to be nominated as patrons of charities, degrading the efforts of those who make genuine contributions and have real expertise.”

We used two methods to investigate whether Royal involvement with charities increases generosity. Clearly it is impossible to identify the effect precisely because there are no neat comparisons of a country both with and without its Royal family, so we cannot construct a valid counterfactual. But we did some reasonable analysis on two sets of relevant data to gain some insight. The first analysis looks within the UK, at geographic patterns of giving compared to regional patterns of where the Royal patronages are. Second, we look internationally.

Inside the UK: Regional patterns of giving

If Royal involvement with charities increases giving, then it might be the case that regions with most Royal patronages see more giving (more participation in giving) than regions which have fewer. They don’t. Figure 20 below shows participation in giving in each English region. Compare this to Figure 11 and Figure 12 which show the regional split of Royal patronages, and that split relative to the UK population.

Clearly we are here using the regions as rough counterfactuals for each other: comparing English regions with many Royal patronages with those with fewer. Clearly it is not a perfect counterfactual as there are many other differences too.

Below this graph we discuss two findings from it.

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22 It might not, because, as we have said, clearly there are plenty of other factors which could cause differences between the data for English regions. The same (obviously) is true for comparisons between nations.
First, the participation in giving varies very little by region: by only +/- 4 percentage points, and that range may be mainly or wholly the margin of error given the size of the survey sample. By contrast, the number of Royal patronages varies dramatically between regions: there are more than seven times as many in London as in the North East, for example. (There is of course possibly a skew in Royal patronages towards where national or international charities are headquartered, which is mainly in London and the South East. So let’s take instead the East of England, which doesn’t have that potential skew: it has more than three times as many patronages as the North East.)

Second, there is a tiny negative correlation between the proportion of Royal patronees which are in a region\footnote{These are the numbers from Figure 11, turned into percentages of the whole set of UK Royal patronages. They do not add to 100% because the figures for the other nations are removed, because we do not have giving data for them.}, and the proportion of people in that region who give. This is shown in Figure 21 below: the trendline slopes downwards: the gradient, i.e., correlation, is minus 2%. This is so small (and bumpy, given the margins of error on survey data) that we could equally conclude that there is no correlation, i.e., that Royal patronages have no effect on participation in giving.

The region with most patronages is London, which has the second lowest participation in giving. Conversely, the English region with fewest patronages is the North East, which has the third highest participation in giving. Looking the other way around, the West Midlands has lowest participation in giving but is in the middle of the pack in terms of number of Royal patronages.

So these data do not support the view that Royal patronages increase generosity.
Outside the UK: the international picture

CAF publishes an annual World Giving Index, which ranks 146 countries on their generosity, meaning the following three giving behaviours:

- Helping a stranger
- Donating money
- Volunteering time

We used this World Giving Index to see whether countries which have resident Royal families are more or less generous than are countries which do not.

There are five points to note before we discuss our findings.

First, the countries which have resident Royal families / monarchies are extremely heterogeneous: in terms of their histories, GDP/capita, level on the Human Development Index, and the extent of their democracies. They are listed in Table 3 below.

Second, we have assessed the generosity of countries where the head of state is a Royal who is resident in the country. This is because the influence and involvement of Royalty which live elsewhere may be markedly different to that in the Royals’ country of residence. So we do not count members of the Commonwealth.

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24 The World Giving Index excludes various countries which have resident Royal families (e.g., Oman, Brunei), as well as some countries which do not, (e.g., Cuba, North Sudan, North Korea, Angola, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea).

25 It’s a fascinating set in terms of the history and geopolitics that underlie it. None in the Americas; none in the former Communist bloc; clusters in Western Europe (mainly sea-faring nations), oil-producing countries in the Middle East, and Asia; and three in Africa - tiny Lesotho and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), and, at the other end of the continent, Morocco.
Third, ranking well on the World Giving Index is no guarantee of a harmonious country. For three of the last four years, the Index was topped by Myanmar. When we started this analysis, Myanmar’s de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, was before the U.N. International Court of Justice in The Hague defending her country against charges of genocide within its borders.

Fourth, we do not consider in this brief analysis whether or how other Royal families have patronages or engagement with charities in the way that the UK Royal family does. We know that some do: we have mentioned the Swedish and Norwegian Royal families, and the Dutch, Belgian, Emirati and Malay Royal families also engage with charities.

And fifth, any correlation between having a resident Royal family and scoring well on generosity could have many causes. Or none – it could be random chance. It may or may not have any connection with the activities of the Royals, and those probably vary between Royal families. And it may or may not have any connection to recent activities of the Royals: perhaps it reflects the structure of society set up long ago and reflecting many factors, e.g., the roles of state vs private activity, and the role of religious institutions.

Findings

Consistently, the nations ranked most generous do not have resident Royal families: having a resident Royal family seems no guarantee of the nation being generous.

First, we looked at how nations which have resident Royal families / monarchies fare in CAF’s most recent World Giving Index. Below are their rankings. They stretch across the range: the index includes 146 countries, and, because of joint places, the bottom place is 144th. One nation with a resident Royal family – Cambodia – is nearly last, at 140th.

The UK is the most generous of all countries with resident Royals. Perhaps this is due to the recent and on-going activities of the Royals, or perhaps reflects a history that far pre-dates the current Royals: for example, England was the first country to have a legal form for charities, created in 1601.
Table 3: Countries with resident Royal families by position on CAF’s Generosity Index, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>CAF Position 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andorra, Bhutan, Brunei,</td>
<td>Not included in CAF’s analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein, Malaysia (which has nine Royal families ), Monaco, Oman, Qatar, Tonga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, we wanted to check whether the 2018 results were unusual, so we looked across the last four years, to see how countries with resident Royal families have scored in those years. The results are as below: countries which have resident Royal families are shaded red. In the last four years, 29 countries have made CAF’s top 20 list at some point, eight of which have resident Royals.
Table 4: Countries in the Top 20 of CAF’s World Giving Index, 2015-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<td>Myanmar</td>
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<td>Kenya</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
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</tr>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Bahrain</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Norway</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We then aggregated the scores for those 29 countries for the most recent four years. We gave 20 points to the country if it came top in one year, 19 points if it came second, and so on, and then summed the scores for the four years. (So being top in two years, 12th in one year and not on the list in one year creates a score of 20+20+9 = 49.)

No country with a resident Royal family is among the top eight of the aggregate rankings.

These findings from the international data point the same way: they do not suggest that a resident Royal family makes a nation more generous.
### Table 5: Countries with resident Royal families by aggregate score on CAF's World Giving Index, 2015-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Aggregate Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>Kenya</td>
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<td>Indonesia</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>UAE</td>
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<td>Malta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
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<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
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<td>Guatemala</td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

This analysis shows that UK charities which have Royal patronages are concentrated in a few regions (southern England) and a few sectors. It shows that they are much larger, on average, than most charities, particularly those with multiple Royal patrons. It shows that, whatever other benefits patroon-charities gain from the patronage, most (74%) of them did not get any public engagements with their Royal patron during 2019. On the basis of their public engagements, members of the UK Royal family seem much more involved with charities that they found themselves than in pre-existing charities which they take on. We took revenue as an outcome, and found that we could not get a reliable measure of whether the patronage of a member of the UK Royal family makes any difference to the charity’s revenue, though there are indications that any effect is either zero or small. Looking both within the UK and internationally, we did not find evidence to support the view that Royalty raises generosity, either of a region or of a whole nation.

For charities, we recommend that they be careful about seeking Royal patronages. They should not take on a Royal patron thinking that it will bring them funding. We do not know the costs to them in terms of time and attention, but they are surely non-zero. We can see that pre-existing charities may not get many public engagements with a Royal patron whom they acquire, and that the effect on their revenue is uncertain and could be nothing or small.

And for the UK Royal family, we recommend that it makes much clearer the data about both which organisations have which patrons, and makes the Court Circular information about individual Royals’ activities much easier to use. It could usefully expand the information that it provides, to have more detail about the intended purpose(s) of Royal patronages, the selection criteria and process, and what patronages comprise.

This research seems to be unprecedented. We hope that it – like all Giving Evidence’s work – enables charities and donors to make more evidence-informed decisions about how to operate, in order to raise their effectiveness.
Further possible research and analysis on this topic

There is no shortage of avenues for further research and analysis related to Royal relationships with charities. Below are some ideas.

Analyzing the effect of Royal patrons on media coverage

There are tools available now for analysing the sentiment and relevance of media coverage, including social media mentions. They could be used to see whether/how/when Royal patrons and Royal engagement with charities – and indeed social/environmental causes – affects the volume and nature of media coverage.

There remains an open question about whether or when this matters. For instance, a charity may get lots of positive press coverage but see no increase in revenue, which for non-campaigning charities may not help their work at all.

Identifying the effect of Prince Andrew ceasing public duties

An interesting opportunity arises from Prince Andrew “stepping] back from public duties for the foreseeable future” in November 2019. This creates a ‘discontinuity’: one could look at whether his ceasing engagements with his patronees made any detectable difference to them, e.g., on their revenue or media profile. He is patron of 60 registered charities (as of November 2019) which could be enough for statistically robust results.

We could not do this analysis because Prince Andrew had ceased duties too soon before our work began: the analysis needs some ‘after’ data. For financial data, that means a few years’ worth of accounts, so the effect of his departure on revenue maybe visible in three or more years’ time. His effect on media coverage may be visible sooner: perhaps by the end of 2020.

The same will be true of Prince Harry who ceased Royal duties in March 2020. To some extent, the effect of Meghan on her patronees may be analysable in a few years’ time in the same way – though she took on only few patronages while a full-time working Royal, and was a full-time working Royal for only a short period (particularly once her parental leave is accounted for), so this analysis will need to take this into consideration.

Analyzing the effect of other Royal patronages ending

One could in principle analyse also the effect of the end of other Royal patronages. We found a few such, e.g., the 25 patronages which the Queen handed over to other Royals on her 90th birthday in 2016.

Extending the analysis to further members of the UK Royal family

One could extend our analysis to other members of the UK Royal family, e.g., Prince Edward, Sophie, Princess Anne. We included only seven MRFs: the most senior seven Royals who were working during our period of interest, apart from Prince Philip because of the difficulty explained about identifying the charities for which he had been patron, rather than some other role, before his retirement in 2017, and Meghan because of the lack of enough data after her patronages began. It is of course conceivable that the ‘top seven’ have a different effect on their patronees than do the other MRFs.
Testing empirically whether Royal patronages increase donations

One could test this through a randomised controlled trial. Find a charity which has a Royal patronage and a large mailing list of donors: Barnardo’s or Centrepoint might be examples. Divide the mailing list in half, randomly. Half the donors get a funding solicitation (‘ask’) letter which does not mention the Royal patron. The other half get the exact same letter, but with varied so that it does mention or feature the Royal patron. Then measure (a) the proportion of donors in each group who give in response to the letter, and (b) the total amount raised (‘take’) from each group. Any differences in participation and ‘take’ between the groups will probably be due to the citing the Royal patron.

(This research method was used by Dean Karlan of Northwestern University to test the effect on donation behaviour of telling donors that a charity has performed well in rigorous tests of its effectiveness.)

Analyse the effect of ‘dosage’ on the effects of patronages

If one could generate reliable estimates of the effect of Royal patrons on individual patronees, one could combine this with the data on dosage (the frequency of public engagements) to see whether the amount of patron activity affects the difference that patronages make. A complication will be the confounding variable, that, as mentioned, MRFs seem most engaged with charities that they founded themselves, which may be materially different to those that they don’t.

Analysis of patronages of other celebrities

One could repeat the analysis for other celebrities, and thereby compare the effect of Royal and non-Royal patrons. This might be useful for charities to know, for charities deciding whether to seek and retain patronage relationships with Royals vs other celebrities.

The problem of ascertaining exactly what a patronage comprises would probably persist in analysis of other celebrities. It might be even worse, because, at least with the Royals, their activities are listed publicly so one can see the frequency of visits, etc., whereas other celebrities have no obligation to publish such details of their activities.

There may already be rigorous literature about the effect of celebrity patrons on charities (in any country). We looked briefly and found nothing, but the relevant literature may have evaded us.

Seeking views of UK patronee charities on what they gain from patronages

We gathered some views, in an ad hoc manner through conversations (on- and off-line). Somebody could do a more systematic research here, e.g., some interviews followed by a survey. This might reveal many benefits which did not occur to us: e.g., perhaps charities say that Royal patrons reduce staff turnover, or increase their ability to influence public opinions. Of course, even if charities feel that they have received these benefits, these statements may not be true or testable, not because of lying but because people’s perceptions are often an unreliable guide, and there is still the challenge of gathering robust data across charities in a wide range of sectors to test those claims.

Extending the analysis to other countries’ Royal families

Perhaps Royal families in (at least some) other countries are also patrons of charities similar to those of the UK Royals. If so, and if there are public data about those charities’ finances, they could be analysed in the same way. We did not do this as we didn’t fancy teaching ourselves to read charity accounts in Thai.
Acknowledgements

We are grateful to many people for their support, work and data which enabled this project. They include:

- The Belgian Red Cross – Flanders, which funded this work. It has a demonstrated commitment to providing evidence to inform management decisions of non-profits

- Andy Eggers, economics professor at Oxford University, who helped with the causal analysis and statistics

- Chris Lowis, who volunteered to help with scraping and assembling data

- David Kane, a charity sector researcher who helped with data about the International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations

- Fiona Murray, who helped with the international analysis

- John Mohan of the Third Sector Research Centre, professor at the University of Birmingham, who provided a dataset on the financial histories of charities since the mid-1990s. The process by which those data were assembled is described at: www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/tsrc/publications/research-digest.aspx

- Kristy Kim, at University of California, Berkeley

- Various other people who volunteered in various ways

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Appendix: Methods

How many of the UK Royal family’s public engagements are with their registered patronage charities and charities that they founded?

Sample 1: All public engagements by MRFs during 2019

We took 2019 as our sample year, because we wanted fairly recent data and 2019 saw no interruptions due to weddings or parental leave. Although Prince Andrew stepped back from his public duties in late November 2019, his duties were as normal for most of 2019.

The UK Royal family publishes details of its public engagements each day in the Court Circular. They may also do other work with or for patronised charities, e.g., preparation or undisclosed visits, but information on that is not available. There is also no public information about the relative amounts of preparation time required for, say, an investiture vs visiting a hospice. As a result, we simply used the data as reported in the Court Circular. We included only Royals, and those Royals had to be physically present at the engagement cited. That is, we excluded all instances where a non-Royal person was present ‘by command of’ another MRF or listed as representing an MRF.

We attempted to write a scraping code to download all of the engagements listed in the Court Circular, match these with the list of UK registered charities to identify which engagements were with charities, and then identify the MRF who undertook the engagement. This was not possible because of difficulties in the Court Circular data. (See Box 5.) Instead we counted by hand the engagements with patronage charities which an MRF attended. This took significant work.

We identified the number of public engagements associated with UK registered patronage charities through the following steps:

1. We scraped all of the Court Circular engagements for the year 2019 from the Royal website, using a code written in Ruby. This matched the description of an engagement with the MRF who undertook it. The Court Circular cites many engagements as being attended by ‘His Royal Highness’ or ‘Her Royal Highness’, which prevented us from identifying through automation the MRFs that actually attended. The initial scraping of the court circular gave a list of 4295 total engagements.

2. The scraped list of 4295 engagements contained a number of false positives, non-events and duplicates which needed to be removed manually from our total engagement count for the MRFs. The following were removed from our initial scraped list:

   a) False positives which arose due to naming issues. For instance, an engagement for The Duke of Edinburgh Award (the charity) would be attributed to The Duke of Edinburgh even if he was not present.

   b) False positives which arose when a non-Royal person was present ‘by command of’, ‘on behalf of’ or as a representative for (‘represented by’) an MRF, rather than the MRF actually being present. These were all removed. However if an MRF was representing another MRF, this was included in the total engagements. For example, if the Queen was represented by Prince William, then this event was recorded as an
engagement because Prince William is an MRF, but if the Queen was represented by Mrs. Jane Smith, the engagement was not recorded, because Mrs. Jane Smith is not an MRF.

c) Non-events. The Court Circular also lists engagements such as ‘The Duke of Cambridge this morning departed from Heathrow Airport, London, for New Zealand.’ We excluded such announcements of their whereabouts, unless they were being received by someone upon their arrival or they were travelling for a charity. There was only one instance of this latter in the Court Circular: viz ‘The Duke of Sussex, Patron, Invictus Games Foundation, this morning departed Heathrow Airport, London, for the Netherlands’.

d) The scraping method also generated many duplicates. An example is the entry ‘Mr. Gary Jones was received by The Queen today when Her Majesty decorated him with a Bar to the Royal Victorian Medal (Silver)’. This gave two engagements: one for ‘The Queen’ and one for ‘Her Majesty’. Such duplicates were removed.

3. After the deletions in Step 2, we had a list of 3357 total engagements. We wanted to identify the number of MRF engagements with patronee charities. From the new list of 3357 engagements, we used a code written in Ruby to match the charity engagements to the list of UK registered charity patronages for all MRFs.

4. This resulted in 1211 engagements by MRFs for their patronee charities. This list also contained false positives, which were removed by hand. False positives occurred for the following reasons:

a) Charities were attributed to engagements which were the venue rather than the charity. For example, Westminster Abbey has an associated charity (the Westminster Abbey Trust, of which The Queen is a patron), but when an MRF attends a funeral at Westminster Abbey, this is clearly not an event for the charity.

b) Charities were attributed to engagements that were clearly not charities. For example, the charity BEN (Motor and Allied Trades Benevolent Fund), of which Princess Alexandra is the Patron, was matched if the Court Circular listed, for example, “Bennett Street” in the description.

c) Partial names. For example, The Royal Society would be attributed to an engagement for which the entry included “The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds”.

d) Royals who were not actually present would be attributed to charity engagements. This happened because the Court Circular had inconsistent formatting. That is, sometimes the Court Circular lists each engagement as a new paragraph and other times all of the Royal engagements for a particular day would be listed in a single paragraph. When the latter occurred, Royals could be falsely attributed to engagements where they were not present.

Removal of these false positives reduced the list to 888 engagements for the year 2019. That is, we believe that MRFs undertook 888 engagements with their UK registered patronee charities in the year 2019. That is, of the 3357 total engagements which MRFs undertook in 2019, around a quarter (26%) are for their UK registered patronee charities.
5. We then sorted the number of engagements per charity. We manually counted how many of the MRF’s patronee charities had engagements in 2019 and how many engagements they each had.

6. We further divided the data from Step 5 into: (i) patronee charities founded by an MRF, and (ii) patronee charities not founded by an MRF. The Palace does not (to our knowledge) publish a list of charities founded by MRFs, so we used our sector knowledge to distinguish them, and there may be inaccuracies.

Given the number of steps that required manual analysis, this analysis is likely to contain some errors (of both omission and incorrect categorisation). Despite these caveats, we believe this analysis gives a reasonable assessment of the proportion of Royals engagements which are with their patronee UK registered charities.

Box 5: Difficulties working with Court Circular data

Working with the Court Circular proved problematic for these purposes. Below are listed some of the issues we faced.

First, the Court Circular has one entry per day (think of a piece of paper pinned to a board with that day’s activities). Often, the first time an MRF is mentioned in an entry, it uses their titles such as The Duke of Sussex, but in subsequent entries (i.e., other events that day) lists them as ‘His Royal Highness’. An example is below. This makes the Court Circular difficult to scrape using a computer programme as it isn’t clear to the algorithm which Royal Highness is being referred to. (Though this isn’t insurmountable, it is hard, and would have taken more time than our analysis warranted.)

Kensington Palace

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex today visited Birkenhead and were received by Her Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside (Mr. Mark Blundell).

Their Royal Highnesses this morning unveiled a plaque at the Wilfred Owen statue to mark the re-dedication of Birkenhead Institute Replacement War Memorials in Hamilton Square.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex afterwards visited Number 7 - Feeding Birkenhead, Prison Pavement, Pyramidis Shopping Centre.

Their Royal Highnesses later visited Tomorrow’s Women Wirral, Beckwith Street East.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex this afternoon officially opened the Hive Wirral Youth Zone, Bright Street.

Second, the Court Circular attributes to The Queen (i) engagements that are carried out by The Queen and also (ii) engagements where the Queen is represented by somebody else. (These are often ‘by the command of the Queen’ or ‘on behalf of The Queen’.) In the Court Circular text, these two types can be interspersed: below is an example. This impedes computer code identifying which Royal is doing the engagement (i.e., the work), which is what we are interested in.
Third, Royals often are often represented by other Royals. The Court Circular attributes these activities to the Royal being represented, rather than to the person who is doing the engagement. Below is an example. As mentioned, we are interested in the Royal actually doing the task, and extracting this from the data was too laborious to be worthwhile for our purposes.
Sample 2: Sample of patronees, during 2016-19

We wanted to check the findings of the analysis above about all public Royal engagements in 2019, to see whether it was true for a longer period, or whether there was something specific to 2019. Using the Court Circular, we looked up the number of engagements which MRFs have done with some of their patronees for the three years from 1 November 2016 to 31 October 2019. That period was chosen to be before Prince Andrew stepped back from public duties during November 2019. That period does, however, include various weddings and parental leave. We included the seven most senior adult Royals who were working throughout that period (the seven included in our causal analysis, described in Section 3), plus the Queen’s other two children, Princess Anne and Prince Edward.

For each of those MRFs, we selected:

i. one patronee which they had founded: if they founded more than one, we chose one at random. For Prince Andrew, we used Pitch@Palace, as explained. And

ii. five of their other patronees, again at random (using the random number generator from the Python coding package). For Princess Anne, we deliberately included Save the Children because she is so closely associated with it: it is mentioned conspicuously often even in casual conversations about Royal relationships with charities.

As explained, the Court Circular data are hard to use, so we recorded the number of days on which the Court Circular records activities by MRF in their patron capacity with that patronee. Some searches returned duplicate entries for the same day: where we identified them, we removed them from the tallies manually.

The results are in Figure 5: Number of visits in three years by nine Royal patrons to selection of patronee charities. Obviously a patron will do at least as many public engagements in three years as they do in one year (they cannot do fewer in three years as they do in one year), so there are fewer patronees which had no public engagements in the three-year analysis than in the one-year analysis. Nonetheless, the pattern here confirms the results of the 2019-only analysis, that MRFs do more public engagements with charities that they found than with those that they take on.

Analysing distribution of patronee charities by sector, geography and size

As mentioned, the data in these analyses included all Royals who had patronage positions at the time of our analysis. They exclude Prince Philip who had retired by that time, and they include only patronages where the role is called Patron, President or Ambassador. This latter is because we wanted a set of comparable interventions, and it seemed likely that roles with other titles (e.g., honorary roles) might denote a different type of involvement and hence different intervention.

1. Distribution of patronee charities by sector

We calculated the distribution of patronee charities by sector, using the classifications from the International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (ICNPO). The ICNPO classifications were created by Johns Hopkins University. There are classifications at two levels: broad ‘groups’, of which there are 12; and finer divisions of groups called ‘descriptions’, of which there are 40. For example, one ‘group’ is education, within which sit ‘descriptions’ of ‘primary and secondary education’, ‘higher education’, ‘medical research’, ‘educational foundations’, and others. The categories are shown in Table 6 below.
Table 6: Definition of ICNPO groups and descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICNPO group</th>
<th>ICNPO description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Culture and sport</td>
<td>Culture and Arts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sports</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other Recreation and Social Clubs</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Primary and Secondary Education</td>
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<td>Parent Teacher Associations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Educational Foundations</td>
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<td>Playgroups and nurseries</td>
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<td>Higher Education</td>
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<td>Student Unions</td>
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<td>Other Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Medical Research</td>
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<td>Health</td>
<td>Hospitals and Rehabilitation</td>
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<td>Nursing Homes</td>
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<td>Hospices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mental Health and Crisis Intervention</td>
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<td>Other Health Services</td>
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<td>Social Services</td>
<td>Social Services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scouts, guides and other groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social services for children, young people and families</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social services for older people</td>
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<td>Social services for adults with learning disabilities</td>
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<td>Social services for people with disabilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emergency and Relief</td>
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<td>Income Support and Maintenance</td>
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<td>Environment and animals</td>
<td>Environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Animal Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community, employment and housing</td>
<td>Economic, Social and Community Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Village Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employment and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law, advocacy and politics</td>
<td>Civic and Advocacy Organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Law and Legal Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropy and volunteering</td>
<td>Grant-making foundations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion</td>
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<td>International aid</td>
<td>International activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religious congregations and associations</td>
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<td>Business and professional</td>
<td>Business associations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professional associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Not elsewhere classified</td>
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</table>
The classification of UK charities into the ICNPO categories (both levels) was done by the UK’s National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). We obtained a list of 340,000 UK charities (current and removed from the register), each with their registered charity number, and their allocated ICNPO ‘group’ and ‘description’.

The fact that the list included charities which have since been removed from the charity register helps insulate our work from survivor bias: we could include charities that have not survived until now.

For our analysis of patrons by sector, which we used ICNPO ‘groups’.

By matching (1) the list of charities coded by ICNPO with (2) our set of UK registered charities which have Royal patrons (for each of which, we had the registered charity number), we could see the distribution of the patronee charities by ICNPO ‘group’.

**Comparison to the distribution of all UK charities by sector**

We downloaded a full list of all current UK registered charities from CharityBase. This gives the data from the three UK charity regulators (those for England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland): it has over 168,000 rows. For each charity, it gives data including registered charity number, revenue, and the address and Parliamentary constituency of its head-quarters. We used this to calculate the distribution of all UK registered charities by sector.

We then compared the sectoral distribution of patronee charities with that of the UK charity sector as a whole.

2. **Distribution of patronee charities by geography**

As mentioned, the CharityBase data gives the Parliamentary constituency in which each charity is registered. Wikipedia gives a matching of Parliamentary constituencies to regions, and number of electors (registered voters) in each constituency. Thus we could match charities to regions, and hence calculate the regional distribution of UK charities. We also used this to find a comparable regional distribution of the UK’s population, taking electors as a proxy for the whole population.

We used a similar approach to find the region of each patronee charity, and hence calculate the regional distribution of patronees.

We could then compare the geographic distribution of patronee charities with that of the UK population.

3. **Distribution of patronee charities by size**

The CharityBase data gives the revenue for each charity that is registered in the most recently-filed annual accounts (among other financial data, such as expenditure). We matched this with the list of patronee charities, with their charity numbers, to find the distribution of revenue of patronee charities. We also used the CharityBase revenue data to find the average revenue of UK charities, for comparison.
For the analysis of patronages’ effects:

The members of the Royal family whose effects on patronee charities we analysed

We focused on the most senior Royals who have charity patronages. Specifically, we included:

- The Queen
- The Prince of Wales (Charles: 1st in line of accession)
- The Duchess of Cornwall (Camilla)
- The Duke of Cambridge (William: 2nd)
- The Duchess of Cambridge (Kate)
- The Duke of Sussex (Harry: 6th)
- The Duke of York (Andrew: 8th)

The Duchess of Sussex (Meghan) was excluded because her patronages all started too recently to be assessed. Prince Philip was also excluded, because we were not able to identify the patronages from which he stepped down when he retired in 2017. The difficulty is this: although we have a list of his current roles, many are ‘honorary’ positions and we could find no straightforward way to identify which of those honorary roles were ‘honorary’ before his retirement (which would not be included in our analysis) and which were ‘patron’ beforehand (which would be included in our analysis.) The Palace did not help, so we decided to exclude him from this element of the work.

Our criteria for determining which patronages to include

We are only interested in UK Royals’ patronages of UK registered charities. So we excluded:

- Patronages of entities which are not UK registered charities. That includes patronages of: various parts of the UK Armed Forces; foreign entities; hospitals and other entities which are part of the NHS or non-departmental public bodies, such as Kew Gardens, of which the Prince of Wales is patron.

- Roles with other entities which are not registered charities, e.g., Prince Andrew was/is patron of 30 golf clubs and Prince Charles is a ‘Freeman’ or ‘Honorary Citizen’ of five cities.

- Entities which are not the whole organisation, such as projects or parts of other entities. For example, the Duchess of Cornwall is patron of the Royal British Legion Women’s Section, which is part of the Royal British Legion and hence excluded from our analysis. Equally, the Duke of York was/is patron of Interfaith Explorers: that is a project of the Maimonides Interfaith Foundation. The charity number cited by that foundation is the charity number of the Khalili Foundation (which the Duke of York’s website also listed at one of his patronages). We included in our analysis the Khalili Foundation but not the Maimonides Interfaith Foundation or Interfaith Explorers.
In practice, this first criterion meant that we could only include charities which:

- **Publish accounts through the charity regulator**, since we needed to analyse their financials. That means that we excluded those whose revenue is below the threshold where they need to report financials, and also some who don’t report through a regulator. An example of this latter is the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, which is ‘a charity exempt from registration under the Charities Act of 2011’ix.

- **Were still in operation** and on the charity register at the end of 2019.

- **Did not have irregularities in their financial data.** We found a few which did (e.g., for which the historical financial data we used seemed, for a relevant year, to have no record, or in some cases, more than one record), which we excluded on that basis.

For our analysis, we needed patronages for which we had revenue data for a few years both before and after the patronage started. That meant:

- For many charities, we could not identify the start-date of the patronage, so they had to be excluded.

- We could include patronages which **started after 1998 and before 2017**. The beginning of that range was set because we had data for charities’ accounts from 1995 onwards, so we had adequate data before a patronage that started in 1998. The end of that range was set because patronages which started after 2017 have too few years of financial data after the patronage started. That is why we had to exclude from this analysis the Duchess of Sussex, who joined the Royal family 2018.

- We had to **exclude patronees which were (co)founded by the MRF**. This is because by definition, there is no data for them before the MRF became involved. Examples include the Invictus Games, (co?) founded by Prince Harry; the Prince’s Trust, founded by Prince Charles; and the Royal Foundation, founded by Prince William and Prince Harry.

We also **excluded charities which have more than one Royal patron**. This is simply because of the difficulty of disentangling the effect of one MRF from another, especially if the various patrons became involved at different times.

We also excluded **schools and universities**. This is because the sole outcome that we could analyse was revenue, and the impact (or success) of a school or university seems to us much less related to its revenue than that of other types of charity. (Other people may disagree with our view here, and are of course welcome to repeat our analysis with different inclusion and exclusion criteria.)

As mentioned, we included only instances where the **title** is Patron, Ambassador or President. We assumed that those three roles denote the same thing, i.e., the same intervention. We excluded instances where they have other titles such as ‘member’, or ‘honorary President’.

There were some patronages listed where we **could not identify the organisation**. This was either because there are multiple registered UK charities with that name, or there are none. For example, there were several instances where the Royal website listed a part of the military – which would be excluded – but there is an associated charity, and it was not clear which entity was the patronee.

So, in summary, we included patronages which are **all** of the following:

1. Of UK registered charities (i.e., which have a registered charity number) and which we could identify and which report financials through a charity regulator
2. A patronage (or similar) and not just a ‘membership’ or honorary position

3. Not a school or university

4. Not founded by an MRF

5. Have no more than one Royal patron

6. We could identify as having started or finished between 1998 and 2017

**Identifying start- and end-dates for patronages**

Unfortunately, the UK Royal family does not publish the start-date for most patronages.

**Start dates**

We found the start-dates for patronages of the following:

1. Prince Charles: on the website for his office.

2. The Duchess of Cornwall: on the website for her office.

3. The Duke of York on his website.

4. The Duchess of Cambridge. The start dates for hers were listed on the website for her and her husband’s office until it was merged into the main Royal website (Royal.uk). We had started this project in 2016, so had gathered the start-dates from that website at that point. The more recent ones we gathered from press and press releases.

5. We searched for start-dates of patronages of Princes William and Harry through simple internet searches of press releases and press reports. We could find (reported) start-dates for all five of Prince Harry’s patronee charities which he did not found, and 12 of Prince William’s 13 registered charities (as a single MRF), this excludes The Royal Foundation which Prince William co-founded.

For the Queen, we looked for data on start dates from the press. We found very few. In cases where only the year was provided by the source, the 1st of January of that year was assumed as a start date. In cases where the month and year were provided, the 1st of the month was assumed as a start date.

**Identifying includable patronages of UK registered charities**

In principle, it should be simple, because (i) the Royal family publishes its list of ‘charities and patronages’ (although only some patronages are of charities), and (ii) the list of UK registered charities is published by the regulators, so it should be easy to just line up the two lists. In the event, this was a significant task.

The patronage information provided by the Palace on its website is in drop-down menus for each MRF. No user-friendly list of Royal patronages is available, so we therefore had to create our own data set. We used computational codes to ‘scrape’ the information from Royal.uk. Scraping can be inaccurate, so we scraped the website twice using two different purpose-built scraping codes. Creating two lists enabled us to double-check our results and ensure higher accuracy.
Step 1: Generating a list for all entities with Royal patronages (all MRFs)

Using Royal.uk

We scraped the website twice using two different purpose-built scraping codes, creating what we call List 1 and List 2. List 1 was generated using a code written in Python (by a volunteer) and List 2 was generated using a code written in Ruby (by a coder who is a part of DataKind).

There are some differences between List 1 and List 2, which included at this stage only data from Royal.uk. List 1 contained 2810 unique establishments with MRFs while List 2 contained 3263 entries. This was due to differences in how the scraping codes were written. For the most part, the differences in the two lists are attributable to the fact that List 2 generated separate entries for patronages with multiple Royal patronages and also separate entries for when a Royal had multiple roles in a single patronage. Also, website scraping is not a perfect process as the html code underlying what you see on the website is not always uniform in structure. This is why we obtained the information from Royal.uk in two ways, to double-check our process. Because of the inherent difficulties in obtaining the ‘perfect scraping’, there may be some items still omitted from the master list.

From these large data sets, we sought a master dataset for each MRF which met all the inclusion criteria set out above. So we processed List 1 and List 2 in two ways, to prevent errors and to provide a double check. Figure 22 below shows an outline of how we processed each of the lists to arrive at a master list of analysable data. Note that the Royal website (normally) gives the region for each patronee – though it is not consistent. Its regions are:

a) UK-wide
b) UK (Scotland)
c) UK (England)
d) UK (Northern Ireland)
e) UK (Wales)
f) Australia
g) New Zealand
h) Canada
i) Commonwealth
j) Other Commonwealth
k) International
l) Rest of the world.
There were several problems with this process and the Royal data:

- One of the most problematic issues was that the ‘Region’ designated by Royal.uk was often inconsistent with whether or not the charity was UK registered. We initially assumed that all charities with UK registration numbers would be designated as UK (Regions 4 a-e in the list above) and that any establishment listed in the non-UK regions (Regions 4 f-l in the list above) would not contain any UK registered charities. A spot-check of charities that were excluded in sorting both lists (‘sort by region’ in the diagram above), found that several UK charities that were assigned by Royal.uk to non-UK regions, were in fact UK-based. These charities were distributed across the other non-UK regional categories. That is, they were not concentrated in one regional designation in any obvious way. So that we could include as many charities as possible in our analysis, these previously-omitted charities were all cross-checked against the charity regulators’ websites, by hand. When a charity was identified, these were added back to the master list for each MRF.

- Oddly, both Prince and Princess Michael of Kent are shown in the drop-down menu on Royal.uk of MRFs who have patronages, yet the scraping returns no patronages or charities for either of them (they do, however, show up in the Court Circular). We double-checked this by searching for charities under their names on the website, but none was listed: in other words, they do not have any patronages that we could discover.

- There were patronages where the MRF was not listed from the scraping for List 1, due to
a small error in the scraping code. These were easily amended as they appeared in List 2 and cross-checked against Royal.uk to ensure that the correct MRF was identified.

- Some charities were (and still are) listed on Royal.uk as having a Royal patron, yet no MRF was attributed to them in the scraped data or on the Royal website. Internet searches of these charities showed that normally the patron is Princess Beatrice and/or Princess Eugenie, neither of whom is in the drop-down list on Royal.uk of MRFs who have patronages.

- For most patronages, Royal.uk has a link to the organisation's website. However, sometimes there is none, or it merely referenced back to Royal.uk or indeed to the wrong website.

- For one patronage, we could not establish the Royal patron or patrons: The British Fashion Council.

- As mentioned in Section 2, some patronages are missing altogether (such as Prince Harry's patronages of The HALO Trust). Where we were aware of a charity that was not listed, and the charity's website confirmed it, we added it to the master list by hand.

- It was not always clear whether a charity was founded by an MRF. Though some were obvious, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, many were not. For instance, Invictus Games was set up by Prince Harry, which we happened to know, but this is not in the information published by Royal.uk. We may have missed some.

**Using individual MRF websites**

We also sourced data on patronages by using the various websites of individual MRFs. As mentioned, this also helped us locate start-dates for some patronages. The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall have their own joint website (princeofwales.gov.uk), and at the time of our analysis, so did Prince Andrew (thedukeofyork.org). We also used the information we had noted in 2016 for Kate from the website she shared with her husband, before it merged into the main Royal site.

We scraped the patronage information from these two sites, using a purpose-built Python code, by a volunteer with Giving Evidence. This gave us lists for:

1. The Prince of Wales
2. The Duchess of Cornwall
3. The Duke of York
4. The Duchess of Cambridge

We cross-checked this information against the master list generated in Step 1. For Kate, the information provided by her website was consistent with that scraped from Royal.uk. For the other MRFs with individual websites, we found the following discrepancies (websites change, so though these were true at the time, they may no longer be true):

1. Prince Charles: 22 patronages were listed on princeofwales.gov.uk that were omitted on Royal.uk. For example, the Sustainable Food Trust is on the list of his patronages on princeofwales.gov.uk but not on Royal.uk
2. The Duchess of Cornwall:
   a) Three patronages were listed on princeofwales.gov.uk that were omitted on Royal.uk. For example, Versus Arthritis of which she has been patron since 2012.

3. Prince Andrew:
   a) Nine patronages were listed on thedukeofyork.org that were omitted on Royal.uk. They included the Enterprise Education Trust.
   b) 22 patronages were listed on Royal.uk that were omitted on thedukeofyork.org. For instance, the Friends of the Imperial War Museum.

We also found some discrepancies in naming of charities between the individual websites and Royal.uk. Some of the names of the same patronages were different between the websites - and indeed often quite different from the ‘official’ name of a registered charity (see below). This made it difficult to establish if some given patronages were really present on both websites and were actually referring to the same establishment. Some examples of this are:

1. The Reserve Forces Ulysses Trust (Royal.uk) vs The Ulysses Trust (princeofwales.gov.uk)
2. The Duke of York’s Sports Foundation (Royal.uk) vs The Duke of York Young Champions’ Trophy

This was exacerbated by the fact that there are over 2000 patronages. Hence there may still be some errors and redundancies in our final dataset.

**Step 2: Identifying which patronages are UK registered charities**

To identify the patronees which were registered charities, we checked the organisation name against the web-based register of the three UK charity regulators, by hand. We did this for the full set of patronees, i.e., for all of the 17 MRFs who have patronages, and also for the establishments that had multiple MRFs associated.

When a charity had registration numbers for more than one region, we gave priority to the England/Wales charity number.

As indicated above, for many patronages, the name provided by Royal.uk did not correspond to the name listed by the Charity Commission, e.g., the names provided by the Royal websites were unclear or did not return any charity when we checked on the UK charity register. In these cases, we visited the charity’s website as cited by Royal.uk and tried to identify the charity number from there. If this failed, as in some cases the charity website provided by Royal.uk was incorrect (see above), we searched for the charity name using Google to see if we could identify the charity in question. We did not check all of the charity websites provided by Royal.uk directly, as there were upwards of 2500 entries, although we did so for a sample.

Following this registration number matching, we could identify the following categories of UK charities for each MRF:

1. Registered charities: e.g., those with identifiable registration numbers.
2. Removed charities: i.e., where the Charity Commission register showed the charity to no longer be active. It was then excluded.
3. Unclear charities: Where we could not find a registered charity with the name given by the Royals, which occurred when the name was too vague.

4. Unregistered charities: Where the organisation name given by the Royals was not a UK registered charity.

Finally, we spot-checked our dataset. A member of our team who hadn’t been involved in the data randomly picked two UK registered charities for each of the 17 MRFs. For these 34 charities, she checked the registered charity number (as on the regulator’s website) to ensure that the number matched the name of the charity. This check only flagged up one error, and that was due to a naming issue: the name of the charity listed on the Royal website was somewhat vague, so initially the incorrect number was ascribed to the charity name. This was amended in the main list.

We could then separate the set of entities we wished to include in our causal analysis of the effect of Royal patronages: the UK registered charities who have just one patron, who is one of the seven we could analyse.

**Defining comparator sets for each patronee charity**

We sought to identify the effect of Royal patronages on charities, and our approach revolved around comparing the performance of charities which have Royal patrons with similar charities which do not. We therefore needed a ‘comparator set’ for each patronee charity.

We found three types of comparator set. These are described below (going from narrow to broad). They represent three different ‘levels of similarity’ to the patronee charities. The comparator sets were all organised to avoid Giving Evidence’s decision or judgement being involved in creating the comparator set: this was deliberate to avoid any bias in choosing the comparator sets. The three levels are shown and outlined below.

*Figure 23: The comparator sets we found for analysing the effect of Royal patronages*
Natural comparators

These are sets of organisations that do much the same work as each other, just in different parts of the country, e.g., air ambulances, children’s hospices, adult hospices. We used them where possible. We sought to use objective definitions of those sets to remove our own judgement. In some cases, there is a membership body of them, such as membership of the Association of Air Ambulances. Other times, we used other lists, e.g., from other websites. The natural comparators we used were:

1. Air ambulances: we used the list of members of the Association of Air Ambulances (https://associationofairambulances.co.uk/members/full-members/).

2. Children's hospices: we collated the lists from the following three websites:
   - https://www2.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/portal/public/volunteer/List.aspx?skill=Children%27s+hospice+service
   - https://www.charitychoice.co.uk/charities/hospices/childrens-hospices?onlinedonations


4. Child protection charities: we scraped these from https://www.charitychoice.co.uk/charities/children-and-youth/child-protection/1?onlinedonations=0, and then checked them by hand to ensure that they were actual child protection charities, rather than charities that with just a component of child protection work.

5. Sports associations: This comparator set was created from a Google search of sports associations in the UK.

For each charity in the groups, we found the registered name and numbers from the three UK charity regulators.

ICNPO descriptions and groups

As mentioned in Section 3, we used the International Classification of Non Profit Organisations, developed by Johns Hopkins University, which has 40 ‘descriptions’ (sets) of charities. It also has 12 ‘groups’, which are larger sets. For example, the group ‘health’ comprises five ‘descriptions’ which include ‘hospitals and rehabilitation’ and ‘nursing homes’.

The ICNPO groups and descriptions are shown in Table 6.

Outcome data: Gathering data on charity financials

We needed historical financial data for a large number of UK charities – to cover the patronees and comparators. The Charity Commission only makes available data for the most recent few years. We are grateful to Professor John Mohan of Birmingham who gave us his set of charities’ financial data going back to 1995. It includes many line items from the various financial statements of each registered charity, and includes ~ 3 million entries for ~135,000 charities. It had been painstakingly pieced together from various sources. Its long duration meant that we could include patronages that started as long ago as 1998, and could include essentially all of the patronees and comparators.
Analysis to identify the effect of Royal patronages on charities’ revenue

We had revenue data from 1995-2018, and the analysis needed data for three years before and after a patronage started. We were therefore in principle able to analyse the revenue of charities whose patronages started during 1998-2015. There are around 200 such charities.

We did the following analyses – all of which produced results that were not statistically significant. This is because of charities’ revenue being so jumpy and uncorrelated.

**Synthetic comparator method**

This used an established algorithm\(^{\text{iii}}\). The analysis was done in R.

**The two-way fixed effects analyses**

We ran these analyses, again in R:

1. Comparing, at any given time-point, all charities that have a patronage at that time, with all charities who don’t have a patronage at that time (irrespective of whether the latter eventually get one later). This gives an answer that is implausible. We wondered whether perhaps there is something systematically different about charities that eventually get a patronage (i.e., there is a selection effect).

2. To deal with any potential selection effect, we compared, at a given time-point, the revenue of all charities that have a patronage at that time, with that of all charities that get a patronage eventually but didn’t have it by that time.

3. As above, but allowing each charity its own linear time trend, i.e., allows for the fact that a charity’s revenue may be growing already. This could detect if, for example, a charity’s revenue was growing by 2% before a patronage and by 5% afterwards.

4. As in number 1 above, but using change in income as the outcome, rather than just income. This is another way of seeing if the patronage enables the charity’s revenue to grow faster than it was before.

5. As in number 1 above, but using change in log income as the outcome. This is a variant on the method above.

6. As in number 1 above, but controlling for any trends in revenue of charities with the same ICNPO description.

7. As in number 1 above, but controlling for any trends in revenue of charities with the same ICNPO group.

As mentioned, the results were all unreliable, implausible, and/or gave a huge range of possible answers that included both positive and negative values (i.e., cannot say whether the effect of patronages is positive or negative).

We considered splitting out the results for each MRF separately so as to compare their effects (e.g., the effect of having as patron the Queen vs Prince Andrew), but in the end we did not do this because the data were so noisy and hence allow for so little confidence, as outlined.
About Giving Evidence

*Giving Evidence* is a consultancy and campaign, which enables and encourages charitable giving based on sound evidence.

Through consultancy, Giving Evidence helps donors and charities in many countries to understand their impact and to raise it. Through campaigning, thought-leadership and meta-research, we show what evidence is available and what remains needed, what it says, and where the quality and infrastructure of evidence need improving.

Giving Evidence was founded by Caroline Fiennes, a former award-winning charity CEO. She wrote the *How To Give It* column in the Financial Times for three years, the first column about philanthropy in any major newspaper globally. She is author of the acclaimed book *It Ain’t What You Give, It’s The Way That You Give It*, which is a guide for donors. She has also written in Freakonomics, the Daily Mail and spoken at TED, and is one of the few people whose work has appeared in both *OK! Magazine* and the scientific journal *Nature*.

Dr Sylvia McLain is a physical scientist, with a PhD in Chemical Physics who has worked at the intersection of Physics and Biology. She raised funding for, and ran, her own research at Rutherford Laboratory, Oak Ridge National Laboratory in the US, King’s College London and the University of Oxford, where she led a research group. She has published in leading peer-reviewed academic journals, won awards for research, given 40+ invited scientific and public talks and panel discussions. She was for four years a raft guide on the Chattooga River in South Carolina.

Giving Evidence has advised many donors and operational non-profits in many sectors and many countries over many years.
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