

Who gives and receives substantial inter vivos financial transfers in Britain?

Bee Boileau^{1,2} | David Sturrock^{1,2} 

¹Institute for Fiscal Studies

²University College London

Correspondence

Bee Boileau, The Institute for Fiscal Studies,
 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE, UK.
 Email: beatrice.boileau@ifs.org.uk

Submitted: June 2023

Funding information

IFS Retirement Saving Consortium; Economic and Social Research Council, Grant/Award Numbers: ES/V001248/1, ES/W002671/1; ESRC Centre for the Microeconomic Analysis of Public Policy, Grant/Award Number: ES/T014334/1

Abstract

We document new stylised facts about substantial gifts and loans made in Great Britain. The vast majority of gifts and loans are made from parents to their adult children, and we find substantive differences in receiving by ethnicity, region and gender. Gifts are only weakly related to individuals' economic resources once their parents' socio-economic status is accounted for, but loans are made more frequently to those with lower wealth. Transfers modestly increase inequalities in total inflows (income plus transfers) over early adulthood. Over an eight-year period, cumulative transfers received are worth 0.5 per cent of income for those in the bottom income fifth compared to 2.6 per cent of income for the top fifth. Over half of the value of gifts is given by the wealthiest fifth of individuals and transfers increase inequalities between those with parents of higher and lower socio-economic status. However, transfers decrease relative inequalities in wealth, being largest as a share of wealth for those at the bottom of the wealth distribution.

KEYWORDS

inter vivos transfers, gifts, loans, wealth

JEL CLASSIFICATION

D14, E21, G51

1 | INTRODUCTION

Intergenerational transfers of wealth are growing as a share of national income across advanced economies (Alvaredo, Garbinti and Piketty, 2017). In the UK, the rise in the household wealth to income ratio since the late 1970s saw intergenerational wealth transfers grow from 5 per cent to 8 per cent of national income between 1977 and 2006 (Atkinson, 2018). The growing share of wealth held

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2025 The Author(s). *Fiscal Studies* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of Institute for Fiscal Studies.

by older generations, combined with declining fertility rates and the slow growth of earned incomes, means this trend is likely to continue in the coming decades (Bourquin, Joyce and Sturrock, 2020).

Existing research on this transfer of wealth has focused on inheritances – see Karagiannaki (2015, 2017) and Crawford and Hood (2016) for the UK. Yet there are several reasons to suppose that wealth transfers made during life might be growing in prevalence and size over time, beyond the general increase in inherited wealth. First, as older generations live for longer, inheritances will tend to be received later in life. Bourquin et al. (2020) estimate that in the UK the average age at which an individual's final living parent will die is set to rise from 58 for those born in the 1960s to 64 for those born in the 1980s. Consequently, parents may decide to pass on greater amounts of wealth while alive, so that it is received earlier in adult life. Second, young adults are experiencing slower income growth and face higher house prices compared to their incomes than previous generations (Cribb, 2019). This may mean they are perceived as being in greater relative need, compared with their older relatives, than in the past. Third, the growing importance of defined contribution pension wealth, combined with the ending in 2015 of the requirement to use such to purchase an annuity, means that retirees have increasing amounts of wealth that can be flexibly accessed and transferred to others.

Wealth transfers made during life are likely to also have important qualitative differences with respect to inheritances. The timing of these transfers is under the control of the giver, meaning that they may be responsive to the circumstances of the giver and receiver. They also tend to be received earlier in life when credit constraints are more likely to be binding. These factors make it more likely that these transfers will interact with and influence important choices of receivers in domains such as family formation, labour market choices and investment decisions. Consequently, they may have effects distinct from inheritances and be a channel through which economic inequality is transmitted across generations. At the same time, decisions about making lifetime transfers may have important consequences for saving and portfolio choices at older ages. Understanding who gives and receives transfers during life is therefore worthy of particular focus.

In this paper, we document key patterns in the giving and receiving of lifetime gifts and loans using the British Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS). Our aim is to exploit the new information available in the WAS to build the most comprehensive picture to date of who is giving and receiving these transfers, their magnitude, and their potential importance for various dimensions of inequality. We begin by assessing whether transfers have become more frequent or larger over time. We then examine the relationships between givers and receivers, the differences in the giving and receiving of transfers across those with different characteristics, such as gender, region of residence and ethnicity, and the contribution of transfers to inequality in early adulthood.

Financial transfers are not the only way in which intergenerational support takes place. Co-residence and childcare, in particular, are sources of support that parents frequently offer their adult children; we focus only on financial transfers in this paper when discussing intergenerational support. We include both gifts and loans in our analysis. Loans from friends and family are likely to be on relatively favourable terms, and it is possible that they will not be wholly paid back, meaning that they are in part a transfer of resources from giver to receiver. Indeed, we find that between 2018 and 2020, more than a fifth of loans received were not expected to be repaid at all, and a further 6 per cent were not expected to be wholly repaid. Even when repaid, loans could have important impacts on the outcomes of both givers and receivers. For these two reasons, we include these loans in our analysis but show patterns for gifts and loans separately in most cases.

We find that the vast majority of this wealth transfer is from parents to their adult children. Gift-giving has become slightly more common in recent years and there has been an increase in the aggregate flow of gifts, driven by a rise in the size of the largest gifts. We find substantive differences in transfer receipt by ethnicity, region and gender. Black and South Asian individuals receive gifts at under half the rate of White British people, those in the South of England are more likely to give and receive both gifts and loans, and women are more likely than men to receive gifts. Many of the differences in gift receipt are driven by differences in the wealth of receivers' parents. While gifts are only weakly related to individuals' economic resources once their parents' socio-economic status is

accounted for, loans are made more frequently to those with lower wealth, and are less strongly driven by parental wealth. Transfers increase inequalities in early-adulthood economic resources, measured in terms of income received from all sources in early life. Over an eight-year period, cumulative transfers received are worth 0.5 per cent of income for those in the bottom income fifth compared to 2.6 per cent of income for the top fifth. Transfers are received unequally across those with better-off and less-well-off parents. Over half of the value of gifts is given by the wealthiest fifth of individuals, and transfers increase inequalities between those with higher and lower socio-economic status parents. However, transfers decrease relative inequalities in wealth, being largest as a share of wealth for those at the bottom of the wealth distribution.

2 | RELATED LITERATURE

We build on a previous literature which has documented some of the patterns in inter vivos transfers in various countries. McGarry (2016) looks at the longitudinal element of inter vivos transfers in the US, and – along with Berry (2008) and Norton and Van Houtven (2006) – the influences on making transfers. Albertini, Kohli and Vogel (2007) look at a range of European countries, finding that people from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to make larger transfers. Huang, Perales and Western (2021) use Australian survey data to look at interactions between socio-economic background and life events in determining transfer frequency and size. Niimi (2019) looks at how inter vivos transfers interact with inheritance tax thresholds in Japan.

Work on inter vivos transfers in the UK has focused primarily on their magnitude and association with some basic characteristics. Karagiannaki (2011) uses data from the British Household Panel Study (BHPS) covering the years 1992 to 2008, and the Attitudes to Inheritance Survey (AIS), a one-off survey conducted in 2004. The paper documents associations between recipients' characteristics and their probability of receiving a transfer, finding that younger adults and those with higher levels of education are more likely to receive transfers. Controlling for a measure of parents' social class, an individual's income is negatively related to their probability of receiving a transfer. Similar patterns have been documented by Hills (2015), using the BHPS and covering the period between 1995 and 2005.

Questions in the BHPS may fail to capture larger irregular transfers, focusing instead on regular flows of giving.¹ The AIS also has limitations stemming from the fact that it asks retrospective questions about the receipt of transfers.² The WAS, which has information on the timing of all substantial transfers and on the characteristics of givers and receivers before and after transfers are received, therefore allows us to build on this research by providing a more detailed, comprehensive and up-to-date picture of significant financial transfers in Great Britain.

Nolan et al. (2022) look at the overall patterns in both inheritances and lifetime gifts in the WAS, documenting correlation of transfer receipt with receivers' age, education level, wealth and income. In general, they combine inheritances and gifts, and only look at large gifts.³ Given their focus on cross-country comparisons, they consider the relationship between transfers received and a relatively limited range of characteristics. We are able to shed further light on the impacts of transfers on differences in economic resources along a wider number of dimensions, including by region and ethnicity, and to use the longitudinal nature of the WAS to look at cumulative transfers received over time. We choose to focus in particular on transfers made during life, which is especially important as lifetime gifts may

¹ This is evidenced by the fact that the reported frequency of transfer receipt is much lower, at 0.9 per cent of adults annually, than the estimates made by Karagiannaki (2011) from the BHPS social support module or that we make using the WAS.

² Specifically, only the date at which the last gift was received is reported, making it difficult to look at the timing of gift receipt over the life cycle accurately. It is impossible to precisely estimate the total real value of gifts, as they cannot all be converted into common prices. There may also be issues surrounding older cohorts' recall of gifts received much earlier in their lives. Finally, because characteristics are only seen after receipt of a transfer, correlations may be capturing the effect of the transfer.

³ They examine gifts above £3,000 in 2010 prices; more than half of the gifts we examine in this paper are below this value.

have patterns and effects distinct from inheritances. We are also able to exploit questions in the most recent wave of data that allow us to look at the characteristics associated with giving transfers.

There is limited pre-existing work on those giving financial transfers in the UK: less is known about their relationship to receivers, or the distribution of giving across those with different characteristics. Hills (2015) and Karagiannaki (2011) find that those who are better qualified, homeowners, and with higher incomes are more likely to report making financial transfers. The BHPS does not allow investigation of the size of these transfers, however, and may not fully capture one-off gifts, unlike the WAS. Dolton et al. (2019) documents the findings of a one-off survey, which collected information on some characteristics of givers, finding that older and wealthier people are more likely to give substantive gifts.

We go beyond these existing studies and further our understanding of the nature of inter vivos transfers in Great Britain in several key ways. The availability of seven waves of the WAS, covering the years between 2006–08 and 2018–20, allows us to examine how the prevalence and magnitudes of gifts and loans are changing over time. We use newly available questions asked in round 7 of the WAS (2018–20) to both examine the relationship between givers and receivers and give more detailed information about the characteristics of givers. We consider the relationship between the size and frequency of transfer receipt and a wider range of characteristics, including ethnicity, gender and region, where inequalities in transfers could be of significance. Controlling for measures of parents' socio-economic status allows us to examine the relationships between transfers and characteristics such as receivers' wealth and income levels, accounting for parents' resources. Exploiting the panel nature of our data set, we are able to look at the cumulative size of transfers in early life, showing how much transfers contribute to driving overall resource inequalities. Finally, as the WAS covers both gifts and loans, we are able to examine both of these potentially important sources of assistance.

In providing this new picture of the patterns in intergenerational transfers in the UK, we contribute to a literature which has sought to understand the contribution of intergenerational wealth transfers to inequalities in economic resources across a number of countries. Examining the receipt of inheritances, Crawford and Hood (2016) and Karagiannaki (2015) find that inheritances increase the absolute dispersion of wealth in the UK but that they have a moderate impact on standard inequality measures. Studies from Denmark (Boserup, Kopczuk and Kreiner, 2016) and Sweden (Elinder, Erixson and Waldenström, 2018) also find this increase in absolute dispersion but report a reduction in relative measures of wealth inequality as a result of inheritances. Studying Norway, Black et al. (2020) find that inheritances and gifts are larger for those with higher lifetime income but are not a quantitatively significant determinant of wealth or wealth inequality. Our focus is on inter vivos transfers, not inheritances. By focusing on the cumulative transfers received during early life, our paper relates to Boserup, Kopczuk and Kreiner (2018), which finds that wealth transfers received explain 50 per cent of wealth at the start of adulthood in Denmark and are strongly predictive of later wealth. The importance of transfers received in early life drives a strong relationship between parents' and children's wealth in early adulthood that declines as children's earnings increase (Boserup, Kopczuk and Kreiner, 2017). We provide the first evidence of the contribution of cumulative transfers received to early-life economic inequalities in Great Britain.

3 | DATA

We use data from the WAS, which is a panel survey run by the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), covering those living in Great Britain. It has run every two years since 2006–08, with each round covering two years and the most recent round of data being from 2018–20.⁴ The survey aims

⁴ Each of the first five waves of the WAS ran from July to June of the year two years later, covering July 2006 to June 2016. The WAS switched from 'waves' to 'rounds' after wave 5, with the new 'round' format aligning with financial years (i.e. two years from April). Part of wave 5 therefore overlaps with round 6.

to achieve good coverage of high-wealth individuals by oversampling households in postcodes with high-income individuals, although it has been shown to under-sample the very wealthiest individuals (Advani, Bangham and Leslie, 2021).

The survey asks all respondents whether they have received goods or cash gifts worth £500 or more at any one time in the last two years, and the precise value of these gifts.⁵ Respondents are also asked whether they have received cash loans of £500 or more from family or friends, and the value of these. The sort of transfer behaviour we capture is thus gifts and loans that are large at a single point in time, rather than smaller, perhaps more regular financial flows. In round 7 (covering 2018 to 2020), receivers are asked from whom they received each gift and loan. Respondents are also asked whether they have given any goods or cash gifts worth £500 or more, to whom they gave these gifts, and their precise value. They are also asked whether they have given any cash loans of £500 or more, to whom, and the exact value of each loan.

The WAS contains rich demographic and financial information. We use this to build a picture of how gift and loan giving and receipt vary by a range of characteristics including age, wealth and income, parents' socio-economic status, ethnicity and region. We divide wealth and income into quintiles by five-year age group and wave.⁶ We use the value of 'lagged' variables in some sections, which are the values of the variables in the previous round, two years ago. Most of these characteristics are measured at the individual level. In some cases, we construct measures defined at the 'family' level, such as in the case of income and wealth. A family here consists of an individual and their cohabiting partner (if they have one) plus any dependent children. There may therefore be multiple families within a household.

We use the Consumer Price Index to convert the value of gifts and loans, and other financial variables reported by respondents, into real terms. We do this using the year in which the interview took place and expressing amounts in 2020 prices. We weight our analysis throughout, using the cross-sectional and longitudinal sample weights contained in the WAS. Our sample consists of all individuals aged 20 or over in all waves and rounds of the WAS data.⁷ The sample size in each wave ranges from around 27,600 to around 36,800 individuals. The precise sample used to generate each figure can differ, and is clarified in the underlying note, along with the underlying sample size.

4 | SIZE AND TRENDS OVER TIME

Over the period 2018–20, an average of £14.1 billion per year was transferred in Great Britain in the form of significant gifts, and £3.3 billion per year in the form of significant loans, between friends and family.⁸ Figure 1 shows the upper portion of the cumulative distribution of gift and loan value among the adult population aged 20 and older. Loans are both less frequent and less valuable (on average) than gifts. Over a two-year period, 6.0 per cent of the adult population report receiving a gift, and 1.6 per cent report receiving a loan. The annual flow of gifts is around a fifth of the value of the annual flow of non-spousal inheritances in our sample.⁹ The value of transfers received is very unevenly spread. In

⁵ Online Appendix C has more detail on these questions.

⁶ Full cut-offs in round 7 are in Table C.1 of online Appendix C.

⁷ Our age restriction is largely because the WAS does not cover those living in institutional settings, including university halls of residence. According to the 2021 Census, 14.3 per cent of those aged 18–20 in England and Wales were full-time students living in communal establishments. This was just 3.7 per cent of those aged 21–24.

⁸ This is likely an underestimate as a result of the WAS omitting the most wealthy individuals (Advani et al., 2021). It is calculated using figures reported by recipients, and scaled up to the population using the cross-sectional weights in round 7 of the WAS. Givers report transferring an average of £19.3 billion per year in gifts, and £5.1 billion per year in loans. This difference could be a result of our age restriction on receivers, meaning we are missing some gifts received by those at younger ages, or differences in reporting.

⁹ The average annual flow of inheritances reported in the WAS over the period 2018–20 is £61.3 billion. This is substantially lower than the £97.2 billion of taxable inheritances reported by HMRC for the fiscal year 2019–20, which itself will understate the total annual flow of non-spousal inheritances. This under-reporting likely stems in part from the under-representation of the very wealthiest in the WAS data. It is also likely that there is under-reporting of inheritances among the sample members. Under-reporting is likely to also affect inter vivos transfers and it is not clear a priori whether the estimated ratio of the flow of inter vivos transfers to inheritances will be upward or downward biased.

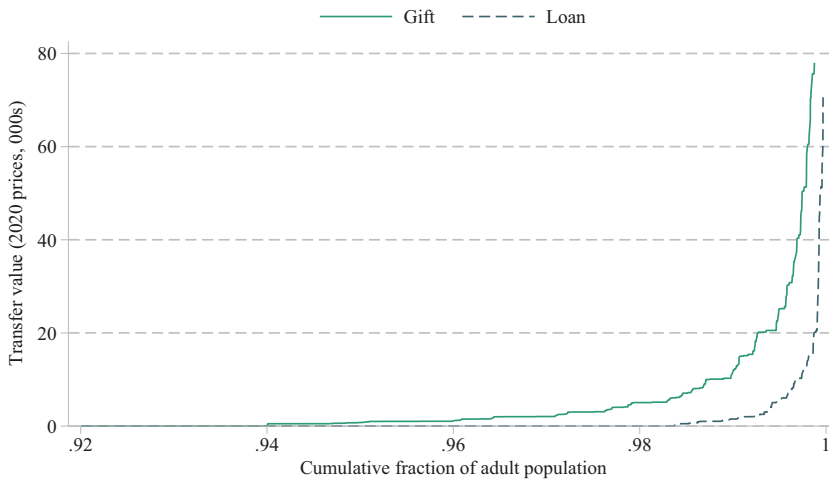


FIGURE 1 Cumulative distribution functions for gift and loan value received in round 7 of the WAS (2018–20). *Note:* The figure shows the cumulative distribution of gifts and loans in round 7 of the WAS data. The cumulative distribution function is truncated to the left because the vast majority of the population receive no gifts or loans in this period. Sample size: 30,523. *Source:* WAS, round 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com)]

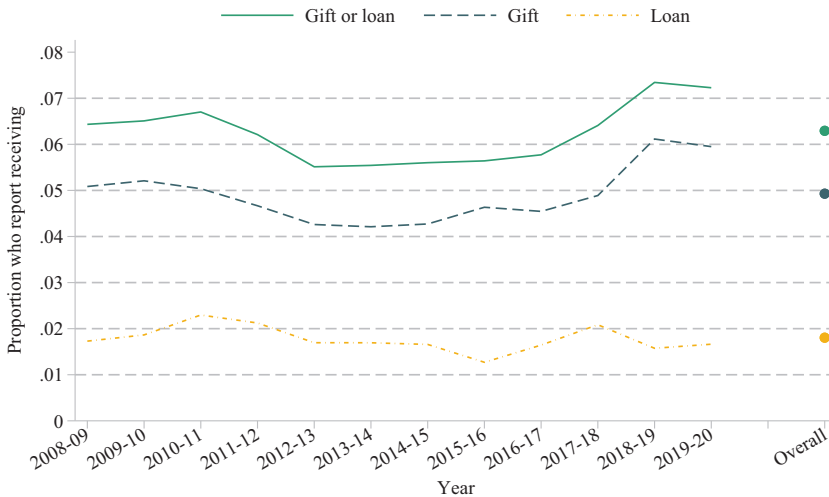


FIGURE 2 Proportion of adults who received a transfer over the last two years, between 2008 and 2020. *Note:* Here, 2008–09 refers to July 2008 to June 2009, half of wave 2’s time period. The time period changes in 2016–17 with the change from waves to rounds, so 2015–16 covers July 2015 to June 2016, and 2016–17 covers April 2016 to March 2017. This is done to maintain the accuracy of wave-based weighting. The repetition of April–June 2016 is not part of our analysis elsewhere. Sample size: 197,100 for gifts and 197,101 for loans (small differences a result of some missing values). *Source:* WAS, waves 2–5 and rounds 6 and 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com)]

2018–20, the median gift value received amongst those who reported having received a gift in the last two years was around £2,000, and 10 per cent of gifts (received by 0.6 per cent of the adult population) received in the last two years were over £20,500.

Receipt of gifts has become slightly more common in the years since 2017–18. Figure 2 shows the proportion of adults who report having received a loan, a gift or any transfer (i.e. gift or loan) above £500 in the last two years, for each year from 2008–09 to 2019–20. The proportion receiving a transfer

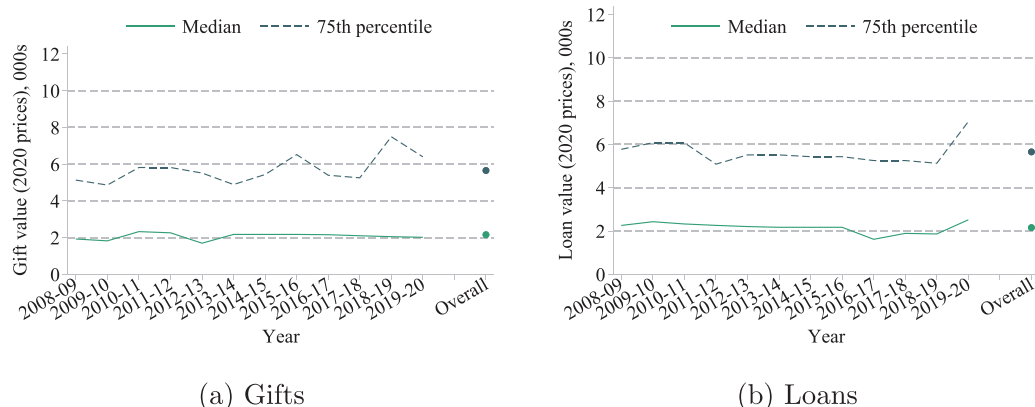


FIGURE 3 Percentiles of gift and loan value by year, conditional on receipt. *Note:* 2008–09 here refers to July 2008 to June 2009, half of wave 2's time period. The time period changes in 2016 with the change from waves to rounds, so 2015–16 covers July 2015 to June 2016, and 2016–17 covers April 2016 to March 2017. This is done to maintain the accuracy of wave-based weighting. The repetition of April–June 2016 is not part of our analysis elsewhere. Sample size: 197,100 for gifts and 197,101 for loans. *Source:* WAS, waves 2–5 and rounds 6 and 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1475-2875.12401)]

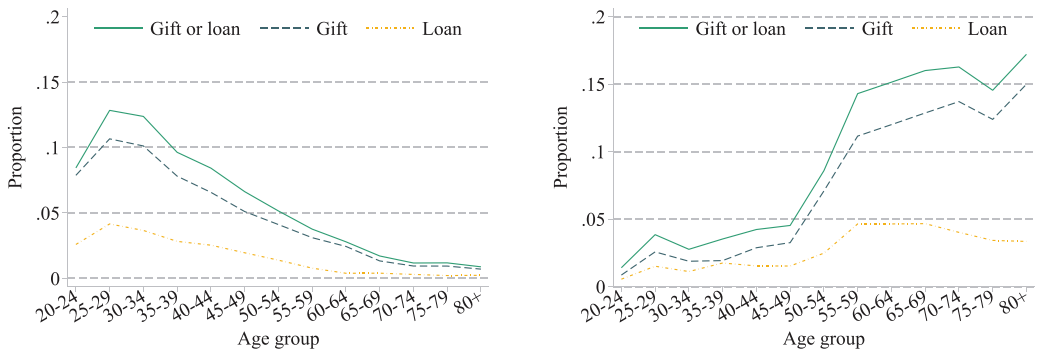
has fluctuated between around 5 per cent and 8 per cent, showing a statistically significant increase in the years after 2017, driven by a rise in the proportion receiving gifts in those years.

Figure 3 shows the median and 75th percentile of the distribution of gifts, among those who report receiving a gift, and the equivalent for loans. The value of the median gift and loan received over time is fairly steady at around £2,000. While the trend in the 75th percentile for gifts and loans suggests that the size of transfers amongst receivers may be growing at the upper end of the distribution, the estimates are not precise enough for us to make any clear conclusions about this with our data. The increase in the frequency of gifts and their increasing size at the upper end of the distribution drives a statistically significant increase in the mean level of gifts received and a rise in the aggregate annual flow of gifts from £6.7 billion over the two years up to 2008–10 and £14.1 billion over the two years up to 2018–20.

5 | RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GIVERS AND RECEIVERS

Gifts and loans flow predominantly from the old to the young and, specifically, from parents to their children. In Figure 4(a), we show the proportion of adults who report having received a transfer by five-year age group. The proportion of people who report receiving a gift and/or loan is much higher at younger ages, peaking between the ages of 25 and 34. The proportion then steadily declines with age, with less than 2 per cent of those in their 70s and 80s reporting having received a transfer. Figure 4(b) shows the proportion in each age group who give transfers. Givers tend to be older than receivers: while around 2 per cent of those in their early 20s report having made a transfer of more than £500, this rises with age to around 16 per cent of people in their late 60s and early 70s.

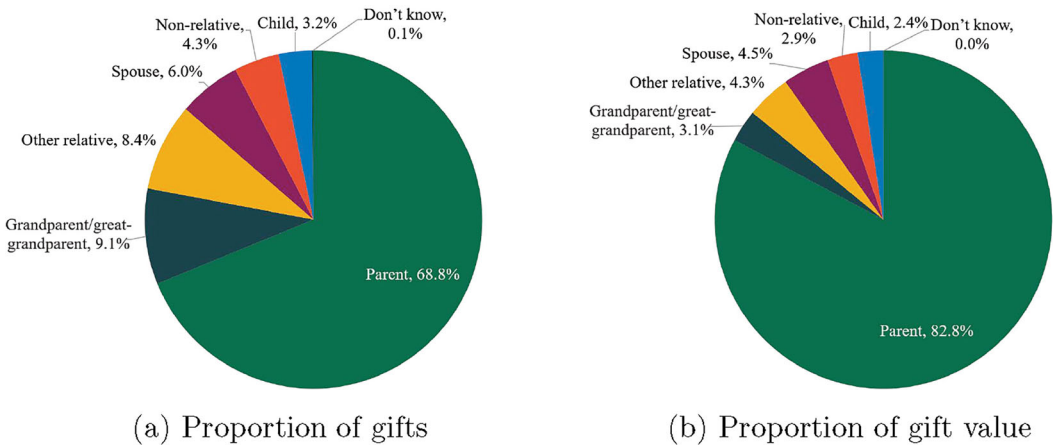
Figure 5 shows the distribution of gifts received, by the relation of the giver to the receiver, for the period between 2018 and 2020. The majority of gifts received (i.e. 68.9 per cent) were from parents, with a further 9.2 per cent received from grandparents or great-grandparents. A significant minority were not received from close family: other relatives gave 8.4 per cent of gifts received, and non-relatives 4.4 per cent. Moreover, a small proportion of gifts were transferred from younger to older generations, with children contributing 3.2 per cent of gifts received. When weighting by value, the significance of gifts from parents to their children is greater. Parents transferred 82.8 per



(a) Receivers

(b) Givers

FIGURE 4 Proportion of adults who made or received a transfer in the last two years, by age. *Note:* (a) Sample size: 197,100 for gifts and 197,101 for loans. (b) Sample size: 30,497 for gifts and 30,495 for loans. *Source:* (a) WAS, waves 2–5 and rounds 6 and 7. (b) WAS, round 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com)]



(a) Proportion of gifts

(b) Proportion of gift value

FIGURE 5 Proportion of gift number and value received from different sources. *Note:* Sample size: 1,617. *Source:* WAS, round 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com)]

cent of total gift value, with other relationships much smaller in their contribution. Grandparents or great-grandparents only transferred 3.1 per cent of gift value, and other relatives only 4.3 per cent.

Parents also transferred the majority of loans received between 2018 and 2020 (Figure 6; i.e. 64.6 per cent of loans were received from parents). However, a larger proportion were received from non-parental sources than for gifts: 13.2 per cent of loans were received from other relatives, and a further 9.5 per cent from non-relatives. When weighting by value, again the proportion of loans coming from parents is high, at 68.3 per cent.

Some of parental gifting represents inheritances received and (partially) passed on to children. Of those who reported having received a non-spousal inheritance above £1,000 in the two years between 2018 and 2020, 14.4 per cent reported having made a gift in the same period of time, compared to 6.7 per cent of those who did not report having received a non-spousal inheritance. The (unconditional) mean gift given by those who received an inheritance was £1,711, that is, 3.15 per cent of the mean inheritance received. Conditional on making a gift, inheritors passed on 21.9 per cent of their inheritance as a gift. By contrast, gifts were worth 2.9 per cent of income over

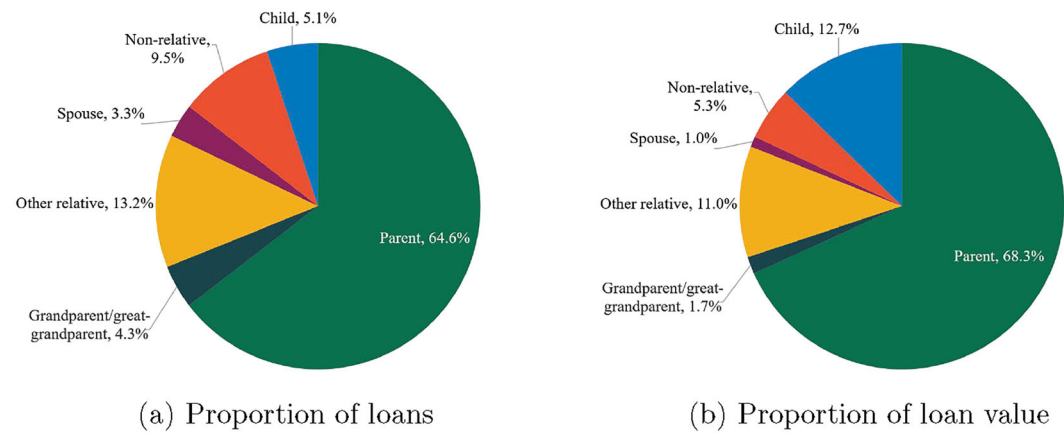


FIGURE 6 Proportion of loan number and value received from different sources. *Note:* Sample size: 370. *Source:* WAS, round 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1475-2875.1240)]

the same period or, conditional on making a gift, 43.6 per cent of income. There is some evidence that some of the amounts inherited may also be passed on at a later point. Of those who received a non-spousal inheritance between 2016 and 2018, 13.4 per cent gave a gift between 2018 and 2020. By comparison, 8.0 per cent of those who did not receive an inheritance between 2016 and 2018 gave a gift between 2018 and 2020.

6 | CHARACTERISTICS OF GIVERS AND RECEIVERS

The probability of giving and receiving gifts and loans differs by individual characteristics. We quantify key differences by gender, ethnicity, region, education, wealth and income, and parents' socio-economic status. We show some key univariate relationships. In addition, we report results from multivariate probit regressions where the outcome is whether an individual has received (and whether they have given) a gift and whether they have received (and whether they have given) a loan. In these regressions, we include the following explanatory variables: age category, gender, income quintile (before giving or receiving a transfer), wealth quintile (before giving or receiving a transfer), education, ethnicity and region of residence.¹⁰ For receivers, we also include an interaction between whether parents were reported to be homeowners and the highest level of parental education reported.¹¹ These regressions may indicate which individual characteristics drive differences in transfers. We set out the estimated average marginal effects of selected explanatory variables in Table 1, and the full table is included in online Appendix B.

6.1 | Receivers

Women are more likely than men to receive a transfer at younger ages, as illustrated in Figure A.1. As reported in Table 1, this gender difference is robust to controlling for other characteristics in the case

¹⁰ We use the lagged values of wealth and income quintiles because transfers could affect these outcomes directly in a way we do not want to capture.

¹¹ The WAS contains questions about respondents' parents' homeownership status and educational attainment when the respondent was a child. Respondents are asked how their household occupied their accommodation – whether homeowners, renters, or some other situation – and the educational qualifications of their mother and father, when they were a young teenager, between the ages of 12 and 16. If they ask for a specific age, they are told age 14.

TABLE 1 Probit regressions showing the average marginal effects of selected demographic characteristics on the probability of receiving or making a gift or loan.

	Received gift (1)	Received loan (2)	Gave gift (3)	Gave loan (4)
Gender (ref. male)				
Female	0.009*** (0.002)	0.002 (0.001)	−0.011** (0.004)	0.004 (0.003)
Lagged wealth quintile (ref. bottom)				
Second	0.006 (0.004)	−0.004 (0.002)	0.018* (0.009)	0.006 (0.006)
Third	0.010** (0.004)	−0.005* (0.002)	0.034*** (0.009)	0.007 (0.007)
Fourth	0.005 (0.004)	−0.008** (0.003)	0.038*** (0.009)	0.006 (0.007)
Top	0.001 (0.004)	−0.011*** (0.003)	0.062*** (0.011)	−0.001 (0.007)
Lagged income quintile (ref. bottom)				
Second	0.006* (0.003)	−0.001 (0.002)	0.022** (0.008)	0.011* (0.005)
Third	0.004 (0.003)	−0.003 (0.002)	0.020* (0.005)	0.012* (0.005)
Fourth	0.010** (0.004)	−0.001 (0.002)	0.042*** (0.009)	0.017** (0.006)
Top	0.020*** (0.004)	−0.003 (0.002)	0.040*** (0.010)	0.014* (0.006)
Parents' circumstances (ref. renters, left school pre-17)				
Homeowner, left school pre-17	0.012*** (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)		
Homeowner, left school at 17/18	0.031*** (0.005)	0.009* (0.003)		
Homeowner, further quals	0.039*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.002)		
Renter, left school at 17/18	−0.003 (0.006)	0.001 (0.004)		
Renter, further quals	0.015** (0.005)	0.003 (0.003)		
Ethnicity (ref. White British)				
Other white	0.006 (0.006)	−0.004 (0.003)		
Mixed	−0.013 (0.009)	0.002 (0.006)		

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Received gift (1)	Received loan (2)	Gave gift (3)	Gave loan (4)
Indian	−0.024*** (0.006)	−0.005 (0.003)		
Pakistani	−0.045*** (0.003)	−0.004 (0.005)		
Bangladeshi	−0.035*** (0.010)	−0.011 (0.006)		
Other Asian	−0.027** (0.010)	−0.004 (0.006)		
Black Caribbean	−0.010 (0.017)	−0.010** (0.004)		
Black African	−0.038*** (0.006)	0.002 (0.007)		
Chinese	0.056 (0.041)	0.007 (0.024)		
Any other	−0.034*** (0.005)	−0.004 (0.005)		
Observations	87,930	87,933	19,981	19,980

Note: The table shows average marginal effects from four sets of probit regression coefficients. The outcome variable is having received or given a gift or loan in the last two years, and explanatory variables are categorical variables for age group, gender, family wealth quintile in the previous wave, family income quintile in the previous wave, a three-way categorical education variable and region. For the receiver regressions, explanatory variables also include an interaction between whether parents were reported to be homeowners and the highest level of parental education reported, and ethnicity. For the giver regressions, a broader measure of ethnicity is included. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. *Source:* WAS.

of gifts, with women being around 1 percentage point more likely to receive a gift than men. There are no significant associations between gender and loan receipt.

There are large differences in the rate receipt of gifts across ethnic groups. Figure A.2 shows that while 10 per cent of White young people received a gift over a two-year period, the rate of gift receipt among Black young adults was 4 per cent, and among Pakistani or Bangladeshi young adults it was 3 per cent. There was less dispersion in rates of loan receipt. The patterns for ethnicity continue to hold when controlling for other factors, with those who are Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, of other (non-Chinese) Asian ethnicity and Black African less likely to report having received a gift than those who are White British. The only statistically significant pattern for loan receipt is that those who are Black Caribbean are 1 percentage point less likely to report having received a loan than those who are White British.

We find important differences in the rate of transfer receipt by region, as shown in Figure A.3. Those in the South of England are almost twice as likely to receive a transfer as those in the North of England or Wales. However, most of the regional differences can be explained by the other observable characteristics of those living in these regions. Controlling for other factors, those in the South East and South West are 1–2 percentage points more likely to report having received a gift or loan compared with those in the North East but other differences are small and not statistically significantly different from zero.

As we explore more extensively in the following section, individuals with higher income and wealth and with parents who have higher socio-economic status receive gifts more frequently. Here, we show that when controlling for all these factors together, parental socio-economic status is the

strongest predictor of gift receipt. We estimate that those with highly educated homeownership parents were 4 percentage points more likely to receive a gift than those whose parents were renters and finished school before the age of 17. This compares to a 2 percentage point higher probability of gift receipt for someone in the highest income quintile, compared with someone in the lowest income quintile. This indicates that it is the resources of the giver, rather than receiver, primarily driving gift-giving. However, turning to loans, we find a weak relationship with parental status and a negative relationship with prior wealth, indicating that these transfers may respond more than gifts to the needs of the receiver.

Also notable is that those with higher levels of education are more likely to receive transfers, as shown in Table B.1. This may be because education is correlated with the differences in parents' resources that are not captured by our measure of parents' socio-economic status.

6.2 | Givers

Unsurprisingly, we find that wealth and, to a lesser extent, income are strong predictors of giving gifts. However, while there is a weak positive relationship between income and making loans, wealth does not predict making loans. In line with the finding that receivers' wealth was negatively associated with receiving loans, this suggests that loans perform a different function to gifts, being relatively similarly prevalent among richer and poorer families, and appearing to respond more to the needs of the receiver.

Men are more likely to make transfers than women at most ages, as illustrated in Figure A.1. When controlling for other factors, men are around 1 percentage point more likely to make a gift than women, while there is no significant relationship for giving loans.

Figure A.3 shows that 11–12 per cent of adults in the South West and South East report having given a transfer in the last two years, almost double the rate of 6–7 per cent among those in the North East, North West and Scotland.¹² Regions in which giving is more common tend to be those in which transfer receipt is more common, as we might expect because most people live in the same region as their parents. When controlling for other factors, few of these relationships remain statistically significant, suggesting that differences in wealth across regions are the key drivers of differences in making transfers. There are no significant associations between region and making loans; the only significant relationship for gift-giving is that those in the South West are more likely to make gifts than those in the North East.

The single wave of data restricts our ability to say much about patterns of giving by ethnicity, given the small sample size of smaller ethnic groups. When controlling for other factors, the only significant difference between groups that we observe is that those of other White ethnicity are 6.9 percentage points more likely to report making a gift than White British people, as shown in Table B.1. There will be significant variation within this group. The point estimate for the Black category is 4.5 percentage points, and for the 'Any other' category it is 4.7 percentage points, but neither of these are statistically significantly different from zero. The point estimates on the Asian and Mixed groups are smaller and not significant.

7 | THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRANSFERS TO ECONOMIC RESOURCES AND INEQUALITIES IN EARLY ADULT LIFE

Transfers received could constitute an important addition to the resources of younger people close to the beginning of their adult lives. To quantify this, we exploit the panel nature of the WAS, using a sample of people present for four consecutive interviews up to and including round 7 of the WAS

¹² It is worth noting that more people in every region report having given than having received a transfer: this makes sense if givers are giving to recipients under 20 (who are not captured in this figure), or if multiple givers are giving to a single recipient at one time.

(covering the period 2012–14 to 2018–20).¹³ These individuals are aged between 25 and 34 in the final wave of data, meaning that they were aged between 19 and 28 in 2012–14. In all four waves, they give responses about gifts and loans received in the past two years, yielding a sample giving responses about transfers received over an eight-year period. We thus capture people, broadly, at the beginning of adult life, and can get a sense of how much transfers contribute to overall resources over the early part of adult life. Table B.2 shows that sample attrition does not affect the representativeness of our sample on a number of key dimensions.

7.1 | Differences in transfers received across the income and wealth distributions

We compare total transfers received over this eight-year period to net individual regular income received (from employment, benefits and so on) over the same period.¹⁴ We compare transfers received to individual income (rather than household or benefit-unit income) because we are analysing transfers received by individuals and we do not want to understate the size of transfers in comparison to incomes. The average annual level of income below which an individual is in the bottom quintile is around £8,800. Average annual income over the eight-year period amongst the top income quintile was around £29,700.¹⁵

Figure 7 shows the cumulative distribution function for the sum of gift value and the sum of loan value received by young adults over the period: 24.8 per cent of individuals receive at least one gift and 10.4 per cent of individuals receive at least one loan over the period. Most receive relatively modest sums: 8 per cent of young people report receiving more than £10,000 in gifts over the eight-year period.

Figure 8 shows the proportion of people who report having received at least one transfer – a gift and/or loan – over this eight-year period, split by their cumulative income quintile over the period. Across the whole sample, 30 per cent of people reported receiving at least one transfer over the period. There is a strong relationship between income and the likelihood of receiving a transfer, with around half of those in the top cumulative income quintile reporting having received at least one transfer over this period, compared to only about 15 per cent of those in the bottom cumulative income quintile. Figure 8 also shows the proportion of cumulative income represented by the cumulative transfers received in each cumulative income quintile. There is again a positive relationship between income quintile and the proportion of cumulative income represented by cumulative transfers. In the bottom quintile, cumulative transfers were worth 0.5 per cent of cumulative income over the period. This compares to 2.6 per cent of cumulative income for those in the top income quintile. This reflects both the fact that those in higher quintiles are more likely to receive money at all, and that they are likely to receive larger amounts as compared to their income. In absolute terms, the average annual amounts received increase from around £30 for those in the bottom quintile to £790 for those in the top quintile.

Our findings here differ from previous ONS analysis of the WAS, which found that transfers have a U-shaped relationship with current income, being lower in the second income quintile than the bottom income quintile (Office for National Statistics, 2018). This difference likely results from the fact that

¹³ While ideally we would use a sample of individuals interviewed for as large a number of waves as possible, sample attrition means that requiring respondents to be present for more than four interviews substantially reduces the sample size. Due to the change of the timing of the WAS from July to June ‘waves’ to April to March ‘rounds’ from round 6 onwards, we also include the wave 3 interview for those individuals who are interviewed in April–June of wave 3 and interviewed three times subsequently (in wave 4, in the overlap period between wave 5 and round 6, and in round 7). This ensures that we capture all people interviewed in round 7 who were also present in the WAS for at least three consecutive prior interviews.

¹⁴ We construct a measure of net income at the individual level, which includes income from employment, self-employment, from benefits, from investment, and from other sources such as private pensions (not relevant for this age group). The WAS collects data on annual income in its biennial questionnaire, and on total transfers received over the last two years; we use average annual measures for both transfers received and net income received.

¹⁵ These amounts may be considered quite low. One reason for this is that many of those surveyed spend some period of time not economically active (as a result of studying or family responsibilities, for example) or in unemployment.

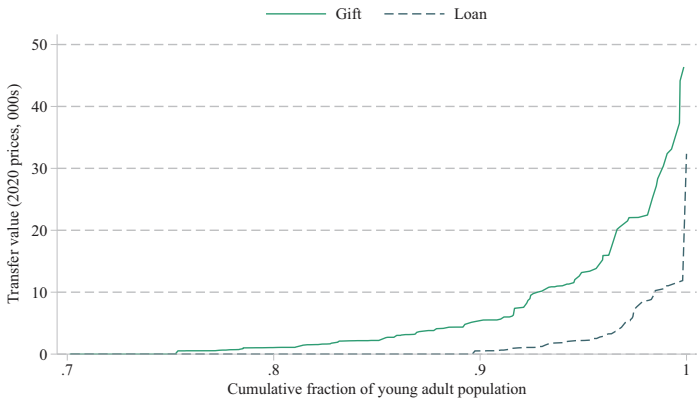


FIGURE 7 Cumulative distribution functions for gift and loan value received by young adults over an eight-year period. *Note:* The figure shows the cumulative distribution of gifts and loans received by young adults over an eight-year period between 2010–12 and 2018–20. The cumulative distribution function is truncated to the left because the vast majority of the population receive no gifts or loans in this period. Sample size: 478. *Source:* WAS, waves 3–5, rounds 6 and 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1475-2875.1240)]

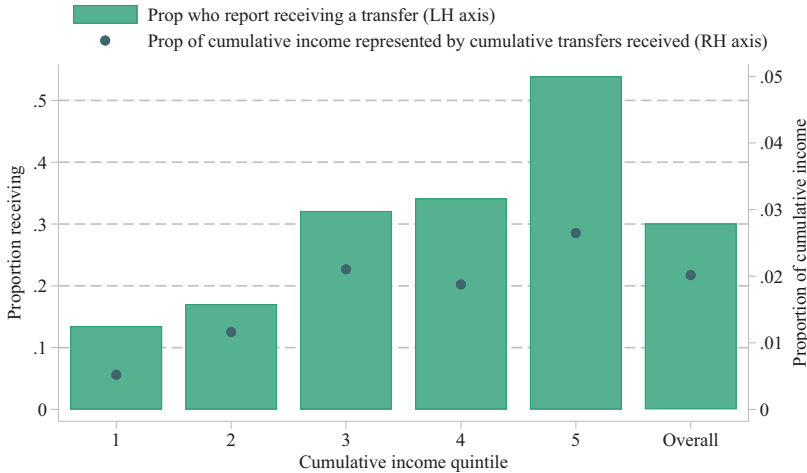


FIGURE 8 Proportion of adults aged 25–34 in each cumulative income quintile who report having received a transfer in the last four waves, and proportion of cumulative income represented by cumulative transfers. *Note:* Cumulative income quintiles are defined within age groups based on total income received over four consecutive interviews. Sample size: 478. *Source:* WAS, waves 3–5 and rounds 6 and 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1475-2875.1240)]

the ONS is looking at contemporaneous income only: many of those with very low incomes are only temporarily in this situation. Because we are thinking here about overall inequality in economic resources, we have constructed quintiles of cumulative income across four waves of data, allowing us to take a longer-term view.

Our results imply that, at least over this part of life, transfers received widen gaps in total economic resources available to those with higher and lower incomes, both in absolute and in percentage terms. The overall impact of these transfers is relatively modest, however, widening the gap between the top and bottom cumulative income quintiles in the annual flow of resources received by £760. Alternatively described, this leads to a 2 per cent increase in the ratio of resources received by the top income quintile to those received by the bottom income quintile.

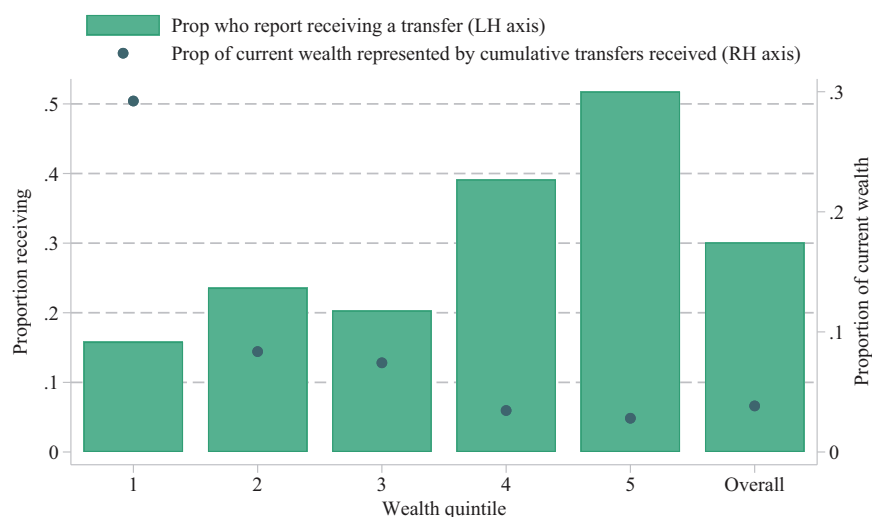


FIGURE 9 Proportion of adults aged 25–34 in each wealth quintile who report having received a transfer in the last four waves, and proportion of current wealth represented by cumulative transfers. *Note:* Wealth quintiles are defined within age groups. *Source:* WAS, waves 3–5 and rounds 6 and 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-2875.2020.12401.x)]

Studies of the effects of intergenerational transfers on inequality often compare transfers received to current wealth. In the UK, the study by Office for National Statistics (2018) shows that transfers received were a larger share of contemporaneous wealth for those with lower levels of wealth.¹⁶ In Figure 9, we show cumulative transfers received as a share of current individual wealth, for those in each wealth quintile.¹⁷ Cumulative transfers are much larger as a share of wealth for those with lower levels of wealth, falling from 29 per cent of current net wealth for those in the least-wealthy fifth to 3 per cent for those in the wealthiest fifth. In absolute terms, the average annual amounts received were around £70 for those in the bottom wealth quintile, and £720 for those in the top wealth quintile. Differences in average wealth across the distribution are much larger than these differences in transfers received – average wealth for those in the bottom wealth quintile is £1,800, compared to £204,200 for those in the top wealth quintile – explaining why we see the strong decline in the share of wealth represented by transfers across the wealth distribution.

The sharp contrast in the distributional patterns in the size of transfers as a share of wealth as opposed to as a share of total income stems from the fact that contemporaneous wealth reflects how much of income and transfers received are saved, and the returns to what is saved. Saving rates and returns to wealth are known to vary across the income and wealth distributions (Dynan, Skinner and Zeldes, 2004; Bozio et al., 2017; Fagereng et al., 2019).¹⁸ The higher share of wealth represented by transfers at the lower end of the wealth distribution is likely therefore to reflect lower savings rates, as well as the different importance of transfers in determining overall economic resources. Indeed, in the case of gifts received in our sample, we find that wealthier recipients are more likely to report saving the gifts they receive, with the gifts thus contributing to both transfers received and current wealth. Our comparison of transfers to total income received arguably gives a more comprehensive picture of how transfers contribute to economic resources received in early life.

¹⁶ Among receivers, the median transfer received was worth 12 per cent of wealth for those in the bottom wealth quintile, falling to less than 1 per cent for those in the top wealth quintile.

¹⁷ We use total individual net wealth.

¹⁸ When assessing the contributions of transfers to economic inequalities at older ages, comparing transfers to wealth therefore has the virtue that wealth is accumulated from, and therefore may give information about, income from earlier periods of life.

7.2 | Differences by parental background

We examine the the role that transfers play in driving differences between those with higher and lower socio-economic status parents. Differences in outcomes between those with more or less advantaged parents can be interpreted as a measure of social mobility and inequality of opportunity (Lee and Seshadri, 2018). We use the respondents' reports of their parents' housing tenure and education level to split individuals into three roughly equally sized groups: those whose parents were renting their accommodation when the individual was aged between 12 and 16 ('Renters'); those whose parents were homeowners at that time, but for whom neither parent was a university graduate ('Low-ed h/o'); and those whose parents were homeowners and for whom at least one parent was a graduate ('High-ed h/o').

Figure 10 shows the relationship between parents' socio-economic status and the probability of receiving a transfer, as well as the proportion of cumulative income represented by cumulative transfers in each group. Those from higher socio-economic backgrounds are most likely to receive financial transfers: around 46 per cent of those whose parents were graduate homeowners reported having received at least one transfer in the eight-year period. This is higher than those whose parents were non-graduate homeowners, of whom 23 per cent reported having received a transfer, and than those whose parents rented their home, of whom only 18 per cent reported having received a transfer. Cumulative transfer value also represented a higher proportion of cumulative income for those from higher socio-economic backgrounds. For those whose parents rented their home, cumulative transfer value represented slightly below 1 per cent of cumulative income on average. This was higher for those with non-graduate homeowner parents, and highest – at just over 3 per cent – for those with graduate homeowner parents. In absolute terms, average annual transfers received for the renter group were around £100, for the low-educated homeowner group they were around £240 and for the high-educated homeowner group they were £560.



FIGURE 10 Proportion of adults aged 25–34 who report having received a transfer in the past eight years, by parents' socio-economic status. *Note:* Respondents are split into three groups based on their reported parental background: those whose parents were renting their accommodation when the individual was aged between 12 and 16 ('Renters'); those whose parents were homeowners at that time, but for whom neither parent was a university graduate ('Low-ed h/o'); and those whose parents were homeowners and for whom at least one parent was a graduate ('High-ed h/o'). Sample size: 443. *Source:* WAS, waves 3–5 and rounds 6 and 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

7.3 | Givers' wealth and income

We can give further quantification of the differences in transfers by the wealth of the giver by using the latest round of WAS data. Figure 11 shows the proportion of adults who report having made a transfer at one point, at least, over the last two years, by their within-age-group family wealth quintile from the previous wave. Around 15 per cent of those in the highest wealth quintile made a transfer in the last two years. This compares to less than 5 per cent of those in the lowest quintile. In terms of quantities, those in the top wealth quintile reported making mean transfers of £3,180 over the previous two years, representing 56 per cent of total transfers. The similar, although weaker, relationship between giving and income quintile is shown in Figure 12. Similarly, around 15 per cent of those in the top income quintile made a transfer of some sort, compared to around 5 per cent of those in the lowest quintile. Those in the top income quintile reported making mean transfers of £2,590 over the previous two years, representing 50 per cent of total transfers. Thus, the wealthiest, and the highest-income, dominate transfer flows. Future waves of data from the WAS will allow us to study the relationship between giving and a longer-term income measure.

We can compare amounts given to the value of lagged wealth in order to understand whether transfers are having an inequality-increasing or inequality-reducing effect on the wealth distribution among givers. Again, the nature of the data limits this analysis to a two-year horizon. Transfers given are a larger share of wealth for those with lower levels of wealth, falling from 0.50 per cent of wealth for those in the least-wealthy fifth to 0.16 per cent of wealth for those in the second-wealthiest fifth. They rise slightly again for the wealthiest fifth, to 0.21 per cent of wealth.¹⁹ These figures imply that transfers increase wealth inequality among those who give, at the point of giving, although the impact is small.



FIGURE 11 Proportion of adults who report having given a transfer over the last two years, by benefit-unit wealth quintile, and mean real value of transfer in each quintile. *Note:* Sample size: 20,219. *Source:* WAS, round 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

¹⁹ Overall, these figures are a much smaller share of wealth than was the case in the sample of younger adults. This is because givers tend to be older and those at older ages hold much more wealth, and because we are considering transfers given over a two-year rather than an eight-year period.



FIGURE 12 Proportion of adults who report having given a transfer over the last two years, by income quintile, and mean real value of transfer in each quintile. *Note:* Sample size: 30,493. *Source:* WAS, round 7. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-2875.2020.00251.x)]

8 | CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have provided evidence for the interpretation of gifts and loans as intergenerational flows. Most gifts and loans – and the vast majority of the value of gifts and loans – are transferred from parents to children when the latter are in their late 20s and early 30s. Gift-giving has become more common in recent years and there is some evidence that, at the upper end of the distribution, the size of transfers has increased. Together these factors explain a doubling in the annual flow of gifts over the ten years from 2008–10 to 2018–20. However, the size of the median transfer has not increased over time. The increasing wealth held by those at older ages does not seem to be translating directly or dramatically into larger flows of gifts and loans, outside of the largest transfers. Neither does it seem that inheritances are ‘skipping’ generations and being passed on as gifts to a significant extent. Only 14 per cent of those who received a non-spousal inheritance between 2018 and 2020 made a gift in the same period, and the (unconditional) mean value of this gift was only 3 per cent of the value of the mean inheritance received.

We see important differences in transfer receipt between men and women, those from different ethnic groups and those residing in different parts of the country. Taking together our analysis of givers and receivers of transfers, it appears that the wealth of givers is the main determinant of gift-giving and that differences in parental wealth likely explain much of the ethnic and geographical differences in transfers received. In the case of loans, there is some evidence that these are driven by receivers’ situations and are less unequally distributed between those with more and less wealthy parents.

These intergenerational flows have consequences for inequality and social mobility in early adulthood. Surveying people in their 20s and early 30s about transfers received over an eight-year period reveals that those with higher income over this period (or with better-off parents) received total transfers that were larger as a proportion of their non-transfer income. This implies that transfers increase economic inequalities during early adult life, although the magnitude of these impacts is relatively modest. When we consider cumulative transfers as a share of current wealth, they are larger for those with lower wealth levels because those with lower income tend to save at lower rates and so hold less non-transfer wealth. This may mean that comparing transfers to cumulative

income rather than contemporaneous wealth gives a better guide to their impacts on inequalities in total economic resources.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding from the IFS Retirement Savings Consortium (comprised of Age UK, Association of British Insurers, Association of Consulting Actuaries, Canada Life, Interactive Investor, The Investment Association, Money and Pensions Service, Pensions and Lifetime Savings Association) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) – through Research Grant number ES/V001248/1 and ES/W002671/1 and through the ESRC Centre for the Microeconomic Analysis of Public Policy (ES/T014334/1) – is gratefully acknowledged. We are grateful to James Banks, Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson, Eleni Karagiannaki, Brian Nolan, Juan Palomino, seminar participants at the Work and Pensions Economics Group conference and the Family Finance Survey User Conference, and members of the IFS Retirement Savings Consortium. This work was produced using statistical data from the ONS. The use of the ONS statistical data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data. This work uses research data sets which may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from UK Data Service. Restrictions apply to the availability of these data, which were used under licence for this study. Data are available from <https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/> with the permission of UK Data Service.

ORCID

David Sturrock  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6048-4156>

REFERENCES

- Advani, A., Bangham, G., & Leslie, J. (2021). The UK's wealth distribution and characteristics of high-wealth households. *Fiscal Studies*, 42, 397–430. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5890.12286>.
- Albertini, M., Kohli, M., & Vogel, C. (2007). Intergenerational transfers of time and money in European families: common patterns—different regimes? *Journal of European Social Policy*, 17, 319–34.
- Alvaredo, F., Garbinti, B., & Piketty, T. (2017). On the share of inheritance in aggregate wealth: Europe and the USA, 1900–2010. *Economica*, 84, 239–60.
- Atkinson, A. B. (2018). Wealth and inheritance in Britain from 1896 to the present. *Journal of Economic Inequality*, 16, 137–69.
- Berry, B. (2008). Financial transfers from living parents to adult children: who is helped and why?. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 67, 207–39.
- Black, S. E., Devereux, P. J., Landaud, F., & Salvanes, K. G. (2020). Where does wealth come from? NBER Working Paper 28239.
- Boserup, S. H., Kopczuk, W., & Kreiner, C. T. (2016). The role of bequests in shaping wealth inequality: evidence from Danish wealth records. *American Economic Review*, 106(5), 656–61.
- Boserup, S. H., Kopczuk, W., & Kreiner, C. T. (2017). Intergenerational wealth formation over the life cycle: evidence from Danish wealth records 1984–2013. Working paper, <https://www.columbia.edu/~wk2110/bin/WealthAcrossGen.pdf>.
- Boserup, S. H., Kopczuk, W., & Kreiner, C. T. (2018). Born with a silver spoon? Danish evidence on wealth inequality in childhood. *Economic Journal*, 128, F514–44.
- Bourquin, P., Joyce, R., & Sturrock, D. (2020). Inheritances and inequality within generations. IFS Report R173, <http://doi.org/10.1920/re.ifs.2020.0173>.
- Bozio, A., Emmerson, C., O'Dea, C., & Tetlow, G. (2017). Do the rich save more? Evidence from linked survey and administrative data. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 69, 1101–19.
- Crawford, R. and Hood, A. (2016). Lifetime receipt of inheritances and the distribution of wealth in England. *Fiscal Studies*, 37, 55–75.
- Cribb, J. (2019). Intergenerational differences in income and wealth: evidence from Britain. *Fiscal Studies*, 40, 275–99, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5890.12202>.
- Dolton, A., Adam, S., Jessop, C., & Wood, M. (2019). Lifetime gifting: reliefs, exemptions and behaviours. HM Revenue and Customs Research Report 535, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lifetime-gifting-reliefs-exemptions-and-behaviours-research>.
- Dynan, K. E., Skinner, J., & Zeldes, S. P. (2004). Do the rich save more?. *Journal of Political Economy*, 112, 397–444.

- Elinder, M., Erixson, O., & Waldenström, D. (2018). Inheritance and wealth inequality: evidence from population registers. *Journal of Public Economics*, 165, 17–30.
- Fagereng, A., Holm, M. B., Moll, B., & Natvik, G. (2019). Saving behavior across the wealth distribution: the importance of capital gains. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 26588.
- Hills, J. (ed.) (2015). *Wealth in the UK: Distribution, Accumulation, and Policy*, Oxford University Press.
- Huang, Y., Perales, F., & Western, M. (2021). The long arm of parental advantage: socio-economic background and parental financial transfers over adult children's life courses. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 71, 100582.
- Karagiannaki, E. (2011). The magnitude and correlates of inter-vivos transfers in the UK. LSE STICERD Research Paper No. CASE151, <https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/CASEpaper151.pdf>.
- Karagiannaki, E. (2015). Recent trends in the size and the distribution of inherited wealth in the UK. *Fiscal Studies*, 36, 181–213.
- Karagiannaki, E. (2017). The impact of inheritance on the distribution of wealth: evidence from Great Britain. *Review of Income and Wealth*, 63, 394–408.
- Lee, S. Y. T., & Seshadri, A. (2018). Economic policy and equality of opportunity. *Economic Journal*, 128, F114–51.
- McGarry, K. (2016). Dynamic aspects of family transfers. *Journal of Public Economics*, 137, 1–13.
- Niimi, Y. (2019). The effect of the recent inheritance tax reform on bequest behaviour in Japan. *Fiscal Studies*, 40, 45–70.
- Nolan, B., Palomino, J. C., Van Kerm, P., & Morelli, S. (2022). Intergenerational wealth transfers in Great Britain from the Wealth and Assets Survey in comparative perspective. *Fiscal Studies*, 43, 179–99.
- Norton, E. C., & Van Houtven, C. H. (2006). Inter-vivos transfers and exchange. *Southern Economic Journal*, 73, 157–72.
- Office for National Statistics (2018). Intergenerational transfers: the distribution of inheritances, gifts and loans, Great Britain: 2014 to 2016. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/articles/intergenerationaltransfersthedistributionofinheritancesgiftsandloans/2018-10-30>.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

How to cite this article: Boileau, B., & Sturrock, D. (2025). Who gives and receives substantial inter vivos financial transfers in Britain? *Fiscal Studies*, 46, 261–280. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5890.12403>