



GCVA

H2 report press release

March 2026 – FINAL

Gen Z leads shift to ‘just because’ gifting as one in five give gifts without an occasion

GCVA data shows gifting spreading beyond birthdays and Christmas into everyday moments

Gifting in the UK is moving beyond traditional occasions, with more people giving gifts without waiting for a special moment.

Around one in five people (19%) now make “just because” gift purchases, reflecting a shift towards more informal, everyday gifting. Alongside this, new data from the [Gift Card & Voucher Association \(GCVA\)](#) shows that “just to say” gifting is growing rapidly and now accounts for 3.5% of all gift spending in the UK, a sign that spontaneous gifting is becoming part of everyday behaviour.

While birthdays (66%) and Christmas (45%) remain the most common reasons for gifting, the data suggests that gifting is becoming less concentrated around a small number of key dates and more spread across everyday moments.

This shift is being driven in part by younger consumers. Gen Z are significantly more likely to give gifts across a wider range of occasions than older groups, including informal moments such as “just to say” or personal milestones, reflecting more socially and event-driven behaviours.

At the same time, gift cards themselves are becoming more embedded in everyday life. Some 16% of UK consumers now purchase gift cards for themselves (often to access discounts or for safer online shopping), matching the proportion who buy them as gifts, showing how the category is moving beyond one-off occasions and into more regular use.

The shift is also being supported by continued growth in digital gifting. Online gift card sales increased by 66% year on year in the second half of 2025, while digital formats now account for 52% of the market.



More flexible products are playing a role too. Multi-choice gift cards grew by 60% in the consumer market, offering recipients greater freedom over how they spend and making them a more natural fit for informal gifting between friends.

Together, these trends point to a broader change in how gifting is used, shifting from something planned around major occasions to part of everyday interaction.

Hannah Shimko, managing director of GCVA, said: “We’re seeing gifting become less tied to the traditional calendar. Birthdays and Christmas are still important, but there is clear growth in smaller, more everyday moments, and younger consumers are leading that change. They’re more likely to give gifts across a wider range of occasions, including informal moments between friends. At the same time, digital growth and more flexible options are making gifting easier, which is helping to support these more spontaneous behaviours.”

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Notes to Editors

About the GCVA

The Gift Card & Voucher Association (www.gcva.co.uk) is the trade body representing the key players in the UK’s £7 billion plus gift card and stored value solutions market. With more than 90 members spanning leading retailers, issuers and suppliers, the GCVA provides a central information and reference point for the sector.

The GCVA’s mission is to raise the profile and use of gift cards and vouchers across the UK – promoting the industry to consumers, businesses, government and stakeholders. The association provides a platform for collaboration, sharing innovation and best practice, and runs a programme of events, research projects and updates throughout the year, including its flagship annual Conference.