



Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Everyone is equal in a garden
- Gardens reflect the rich diversity of humans and nature
- Gardens should offer the same inclusive welcome to everyone

At the National Garden Scheme we strive to uphold and develop these three principles. By their very nature gardens are places that encourage equality, diversity and inclusion, but it is up to all of us to ensure that these things happen. Our [Strategic Plan 2021-25](#) clearly sets out our commitment to making improvements in all three areas.

We are proud that, from its foundation in 1927, the National Garden Scheme has always carried a strong message of inclusion. When the first gardens opened under the Scheme the unique social commitment was unlimited access for everyone, in return for a modest donation to charity. One shilling remained the set admission until the early-1960s and since then affordability – especially compared to similar activities elsewhere – has always been a priority for our charity. We will build on this long heritage by making sure that we demonstrate inclusion that is relevant today and is part of our ongoing messaging about our gardens and our charitable activities.

We will ensure that the National Garden Scheme offers equal opportunity and treatment to everyone involved with the charity, in particular staff, volunteers on county teams and anyone who volunteers to open their gardens. We will fulfil our legal obligations with regard to the right to equal access to employment or voluntary work, training and development. We will ensure that no one faces discrimination, bullying or harassment and offer unrestricted support to anyone who feels the need to make a complaint or challenge issues or behaviour.

Our gardens are usually private, nonetheless we strive to provide access to people living with disability. Currently 60% of gardens provide wheelchair access to at least their main features.

The National Garden Scheme is committed to encouraging and supporting diversity in all areas of its activities and among its audiences. In recent years we have successfully increased the social diversity of the people who open their gardens. But in the wider world of gardening and horticulture to which we belong, involvement from minority communities and ethnic groups is low and we want to play a decisive part in improving this situation.

We know that there are people of all ethnicity and cultures and from all backgrounds who are keen and talented gardeners and appreciate the opportunity to spend time in a garden. We are focused on improving our messages and actions in order to develop greater diversity amongst people who work or volunteer for the National Garden Scheme, and amongst both those who open their gardens and who visit them. We will do this by a combination of active approaches to different individuals and by embracing an increasingly wide portfolio of gardens to open for visitors. Gardens that are an important part of their local social and community fabric, such as community gardens and allotments groups, make an immediate contribution to the success of this programme.

We believe passionately that the enjoyment of gardens is universal and this offers unique opportunities to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion. The beauty and benefits of gardens are both created and appreciated by people regardless of social class, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age. The National Garden Scheme has always aspired to uphold these principles and we intend to be more active in their promotion and development, both within our own organisation and in society at large. Our vision is that everyone has access to gardens and values the benefits to their health, wellbeing and enjoyment of life.