



The National Garden Scheme's Charitable Impact: one hundred years of generous gardeners

2027 marks the centenary of the National Garden Scheme. In that time over 30,000 individual gardens have opened their gates (many opening year after year and some, generation to generation) helping to raise almost £78 million through admissions, and tea and cake. What started with almost 600 gardens as a one-off fundraiser in 1927 proved so popular with visitors, and garden owners alike, that today c.3,300 gardens open each year providing horticultural inspiration to thousands and raising millions.

Originally created to raise funds for district nurses through what is now the Queen's Institute of Community Nurses, the National Garden Scheme became an independent charity in 1980 beginning a new era of giving more widely to some of the UK's best-loved nursing and health charities, to garden apprenticeships and to Perennial.

With a growing realisation that gardens can be hugely beneficial to our health and wellbeing, in 2016 the National Garden Scheme commissioned the Kings Fund Report Gardens and Health - Implications for policy and practice, launched its Gardens and Health initiative and began funding charities creating gardens in health care settings including Horatio's Garden and Maggie's.

Today, the National Garden Scheme's long-term funding has become central to many nursing and health beneficiaries and, with a recent and generous donation from the Julia Rausing Trust, continues to fund hundreds of community gardens each year.

2025 was another landmark year for the National Garden Scheme with a record £3,875,596 donated from funds gathered at garden openings throughout the year. The donations helped thousands of people living with cancer, Parkinson's, poor mental health, or the pressures of unpaid caring, by supporting the nurses, health professionals and case workers who care for them.

Donations also reached hundreds of gardens and health projects. In 2025, 114 new gardens received Community Garden Grants, and five new nurse-led projects were funded through our NGS Elsie Wagg (Innovation) Scholarships – bringing vital support to many communities, often in areas of deprivation. The National Garden Scheme also

continued to fund the training and welfare of gardeners, whose skills underpin horticulture throughout the country.

Commenting on the 2025 donations, National Garden Scheme Chief Executive Dr Richard Claxton said: “It’s nearly 100 years since our charity was formed to support district nursing, and our commitment to nursing care remains central. Long-term partnerships with Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Parkinson’s UK, the Queen’s Institute of Community Nursing, Hospice UK and Carers Trust are the bedrock of our donation programme. With the lion’s share of the 2025 donation - £2,725,000 - going to these much-loved nursing and healthcare charities.

“As the NHS and Social Care sectors struggle to deal with the scale of need, the sustained funding from the National Garden Scheme allows these charities to continue the provision of critical community nursing services, end of life care, and respite for families and carers across the UK.”

Behind this impact are the garden owners and volunteers whose enthusiasm and generosity of spirit makes garden visiting such a pleasure - and whose commitment makes the charity’s work possible. Equally important are each and every visitor who, sometimes without realising it, helps improve so many lives.

To find out more about our impact in 2025 and who our funding will support in 2026 [click here](#)