

Why open your hospice garden *in 2027*

Big Conversation

Wednesday 8th July 2026

Housekeeping



Please keep your mic muted unless you are asking a question



Please note that the presentation (excluding the Q&A) is being recorded



The recording and slides will be on the Hospice UK website after the event



Please use the Chat function to ask any questions as we go along



AI bots are not permitted in these meetings and will be removed

Agenda

10:00	Welcome & Introductions	Kathryn Brennan , Deputy Director of Income Generation, Hospice UK
10:10	National Garden Scheme	Katie Arthurs , Senior Partnership Executive, Hospice UK
10:20	Case Study: Shooting Stars	Alex Buchanan , Head of Digital, Shooting Star Children's Hospice
10:35	National Garden Scheme	Katie Arthurs , Senior Partnership Executive, Hospice UK
10:45	Q&A	All
10:55 – 11:00	Hospice UK updates and Close	Kathryn Brennan , Deputy Director of Income Generation, Hospice UK

Agenda

Who are The National Garden Scheme

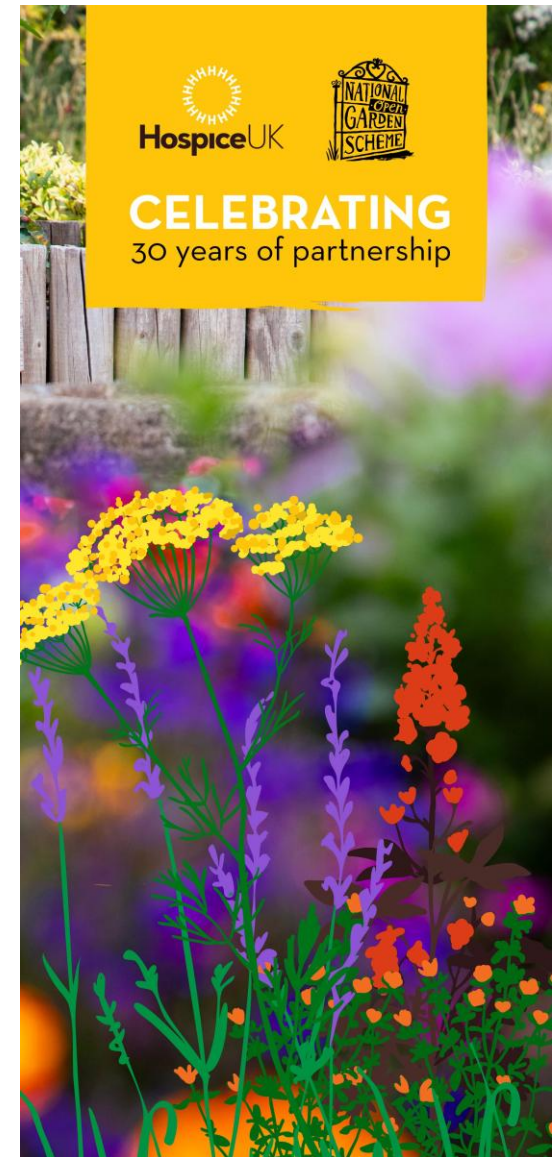
Why 2027 is a landmark year

The opportunity for hospices

Hear firsthand from Shooting Star Children's Hospice

Our 2025 Partnership video

How to sign up



National Garden Scheme (NGS)

Gives visitors unique access to over **3,300 private gardens** in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands

Raising money for **nursing and health charities** through admissions, teas and cake

Rich history: early 1900s they first supported district nurses

One of the **largest funders of our work**, helping Hospice UK significantly expand its national role in guidance, advocacy and support for hospices for the last 30 years

During this time, hundreds of hospice staff have benefited from NGS-funded **professional development grants**



NGS Presidents Alan Titchmarsh and Dame Mary Berry visiting the Hospice UK Garden of Compassion at RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2025

A landmark year for NGS

2026 marks 30 years of partnership between Hospice UK and the NGS.

And in 2027, the NGS celebrates its centenary - a milestone that will generate significant national media coverage and public attention.

By opening a garden, hospices can be part of this historic moment and benefit from the increased profile and engagement that comes with it.

- Be part of a landmark 100-year celebration
- Benefit from enhanced PR and national media coverage
- Tap into growing interest in gardens, health and wellbeing
- Gain regular exposure through dedicated Hospice UK social media coverage

A unique opportunity to showcase your hospice, engage your community and raise funds.



Benefits of holding an open garden

- **Reward your garden volunteers:** it's an opportunity for them to show off their pride and joy – your garden.
- **A safe space for communities to visit:** visitors come for the beautiful garden and homemade cake, and stay to find out about hospice care.
- **Recruit volunteers:** receive interest from new potential volunteers.
- **Bring in new audiences:** NGS audiences have much in common with hospices' typical donors.
- **Sustainable fundraising:** sign up new supporters to your email list, monthly lottery, raffles, regular giving and even legacies.



Benefits of holding an open garden

- **Diversify income streams:** sell off surplus plants and volunteer-made cake, or run a tombola with prizes donated by corporate supporters.
- **National reach:** over 3,300 gardens across England and Wales open each year. You'll be listed alongside them in the Gardens to Visit handbook, and the Find a Garden interactive map. We will also feature you on Hospice UK's website and social media.
- **You can start small:** there's no pressure to go big straight away. Many hospices say that they prefer to simply open the doors to the garden in their first year, and build from there.
- **Open gardens can be led by anyone:** from comms colleagues and fundraisers, to head gardeners and cross-team committees, anyone can take the lead on your hospice's open garden. It's a team effort.



Which hospices are opening in 2026



**Marie Curie
Hospice,
Newcastle**



**Sue Ryder Leckhampton
Court Hospice**

**Marie Curie
Hospice,
West Midlands**



**St Joseph's
Hospice**
Serving East London
and the City

St Cuthbert's Hospice 

Hear firsthand from Shooting Star Children's Hospices



Shooting Star children's hospices

Shooting Star cares for babies, children and young people with life-limiting conditions, and their families, across south-west London, north-west London and Surrey.

This is our fourth year of opening for the National Garden Scheme, and we primarily use this as an awareness-raising event.

For many visitors, it is also a chance to learn something new. There is still a lack of understanding about the difference between adult and children's hospices, with many people unaware that children's hospices provide long-term, holistic support – often over many years – rather than end-of-life care alone.

Why did we choose to open our garden?

There are many reasons to open your garden for the National Garden Scheme, and opening doesn't have to be complicated. Some benefits include...

- **Community engagement and awareness** - it provides a welcoming, non-intimidating way for the public to visit a children's hospice and help change perceptions. Also helping to showcase the therapeutic value of hospice gardens.
- **Volunteer engagement and recruitment** - opening your garden gives your volunteers the chance to showcase their hard work and feel recognised. Opening may also attract new volunteers who are interested in gardening or helping in another capacity.
- **Fundraising** - although admission sales are donated to the NGS, you can benefit from your own fundraising, too. For example, through refreshment sales, plant sales, or your own fundraising initiative such as a tombola or raffle.



Connecting with new audiences

The NGS has an existing audience of people who like going around the country looking at gardens. Many of these will be people in our catchment area, and we have had people come from further afield as well.

It's also a good event to invite VIPs to - local counsellors, mayors, MPs etc.

It offers a pressure-free way to families supported by us in the [past to come back again, often after many years, to visit the hospice and see their leaf on the memory tree again.

Our garden has played a part in the stories of many of the families we support - visitors can choose how much they interact with the stories.



Celebrating our volunteers

At Shooting Star, we have a team of 8 volunteers working diligently all year round to keep the gardens at the hospice to a high standard.

Our garden volunteers have been so happy that we've been able to have these open gardens and that their hard work gets shared more widely. With some volunteers coming along on the day to show their friends and family the work that they've done in the garden.

It's also been a fun event for our other volunteers to be part of, from baking sweet treats for sale to helping with car parking, running stalls or chatting to visitors.



Top Tips

- **Picking a suitable date** - speak to your gardening team to see when the garden will be at its best, and look out for major sporting events that may prevent people from attending.
- **Getting staff on board** - opening your garden doesn't need to be a major event. Pitch it as a great awareness-raising opportunity, and the rest will follow. Look at putting a risk assessment in place beforehand to reassure the wider team. Check wifi.
- **Registering your garden** - registration opens late August/early September, and it's best to get this sorted ASAP. You will then be included in the Garden Visitors Handbook and your local county booklet, meaning wider promotion of your garden opening.





HospiceUK

St Cuthbert's Hospice

An open gardens success story!

- 400+ visitors in 2025
- 15 new lottery sign-ups on the day
- £250 raised from homemade cakes
- 40+ punnets of tomatoes sold (plus plants)
- 6 new volunteer enquiries
- Promoted by their local radio
- Connected with new audiences
- Low-key way to educate about hospice care



How to sign up

Hospices tell us it's easier than you think to get an open garden up and running.

The NGS provides fantastic support, drawing on nearly 100 years of experience helping gardens open to the public.

If you're new to the Scheme:

- Complete your registration by 1 September 2026 to be part of the 2027 season.
- Arrange a visit from your County Organiser to check your garden is suitable to open: there's a link to find your local one on our website.
- Once approved, your garden will be featured in the prestigious *Little Yellow Book*, on the National Garden Scheme website, and the Hospice UK website.
- Benefit from ongoing support from experienced County Organisers and local volunteer teams throughout the process.
- Choose a date that works for you. Gardens can open anytime between March and September, allowing you to showcase your garden when it's looking its very best.

Expert support, proven experience and a simple process will help make your open garden a success.

Scan here



Other ways to get involved

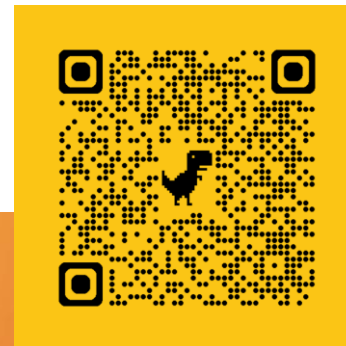
Alongside this national funding, there are also wider opportunities for hospices within our partnership with The NGS:

Community Garden Grants - Each September the NGS announces grants for community garden projects, open to hospices too.

More info: [Community Garden Grants](#).

Professional Development Grants (PDGs) - part of the donation we receive is allocated to grants for hospices' staff (like Katie, South Bucks Hospice), to fund specialist training courses.

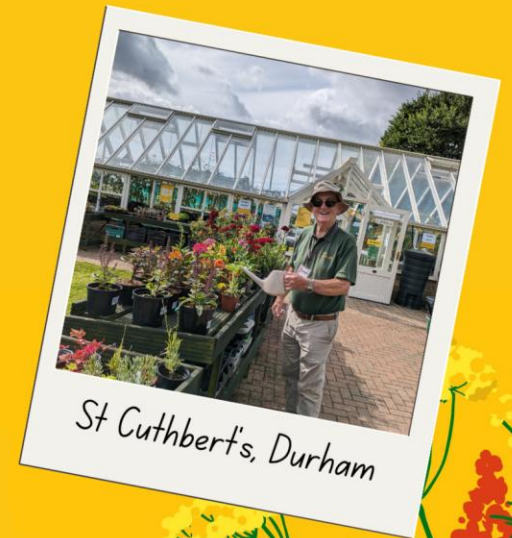
More info: [PDG grants information](#)



Read Katie's story

Hospices in Bloom

Enter our free Hospices in Bloom prize draw and tell us about your garden for a chance to be featured at the Hospice UK National Conference 2026 and win a garden related prize



Closing date is Friday 31st July

Scan here to enter



CELEBRATING
30 years of partnership



Questions?

Hospice UK National Conference 2026

Scan here for more details



Liverpool Experience Campus (formerly the ACC), 16 - 18 November 2026

Enter the Hospice UK Awards 2026

Have you worked with someone this year whose contribution, dedication and passion has made a real difference to your hospice and the people your care for?

Nominate them for a Hospice UK Award in 2026: celebrate the innovative work taking place in Hospice UK member organisations across the UK, and the people who make it happen

Entry closes at **17:00** on **Monday 7 September**.

The winners will be announced at our National Conference in Liverpool from 16-18 November.



Scan to enter!

Feedback Survey

Please consider sparing a few minutes to answer this survey, so that we can continue to improve future Big Conversation events:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/L7WH8GZ>



Thank you