



Royal Botanic Gardens

# Kew

## Outreach Strategy 2022–2027

Connecting and engaging communities  
to protect nature, together



A volunteer for community group Heath Hands planting under a bridge in Hampstead Heath, London

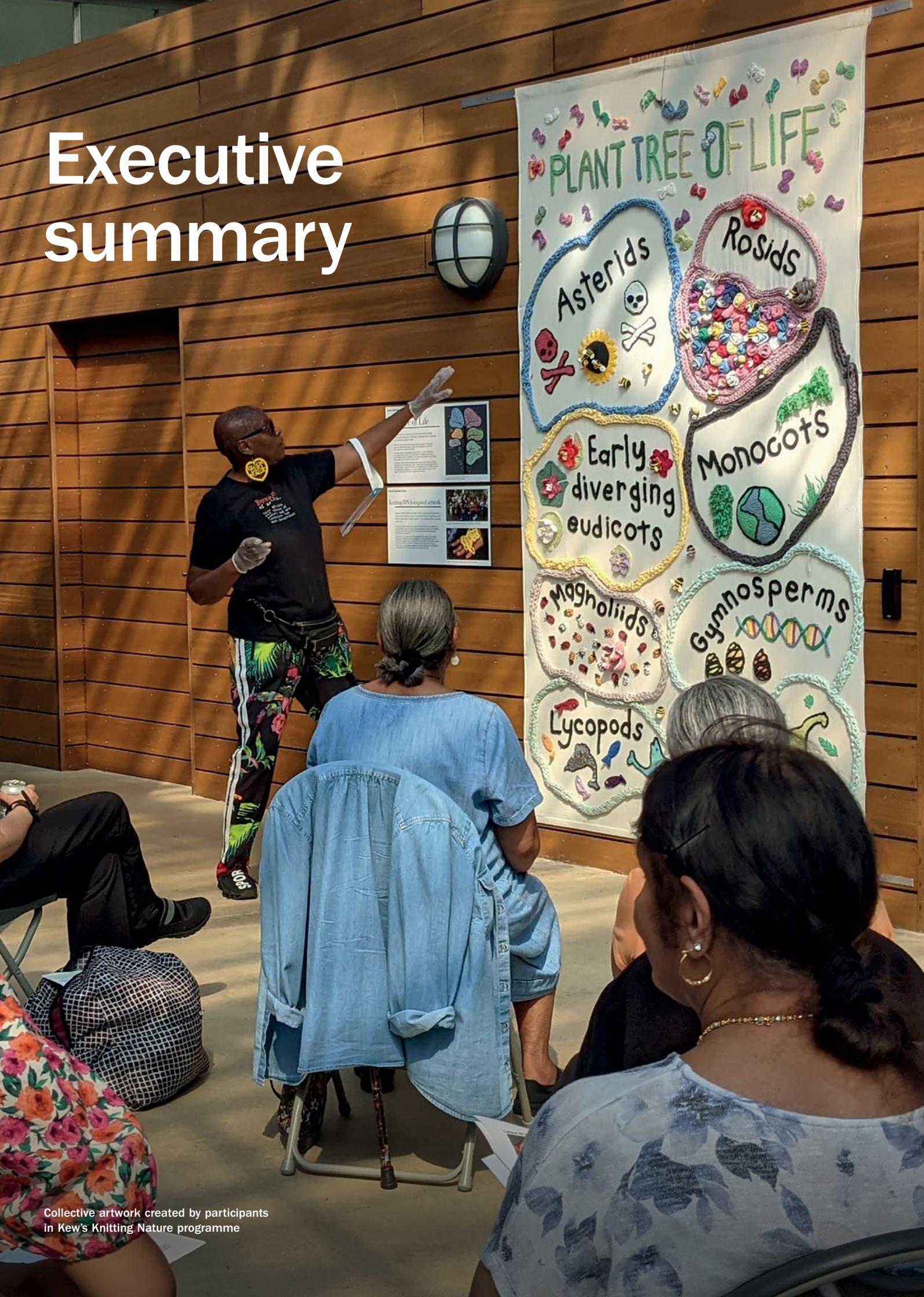
# Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction	4
Broadening our audiences	6
Purpose of outreach	10
A participatory approach	14
Science in outreach	16
Our outreach goals	17
Intended outcomes	26
Communicating outreach	28
Delivering our outreach strategy	30
Modes of engagement	32
Existing outreach in 2022	34
New and future outreach	36

‘Humanity stands at a crossroads with regard to the legacy we wish to leave to future generations’

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity

# Executive summary



Collective artwork created by participants in Kew's Knitting Nature programme

## Executive summary

When it comes to tackling the global climate and biodiversity emergency, building understanding is the key first step in empowering people to support and take action for conservation and sustainability. Our two botanic gardens – Kew Gardens in south-west London and Wakehurst in West Sussex – offer unique opportunities for millions of visitors to explore and understand the importance of plants, fungi and healthy ecosystems, for their lives today and for the future viability of the planet.

RBG Kew<sup>1</sup> has significant experience in engaging local communities in the UK and other countries. Our Grow Wild initiative inspires tens of thousands of people across the UK to grow native wild plants, while our scientists work around the world to collaborate with communities in the urgent task of protecting, conserving and restoring their native plants and forests. This is a cogent demonstration of the effectiveness of Kew's outreach work for conservation. It also compels us to do more to broaden our onsite and offsite engagement and enable Kew's rich assets to be shared and used by everyone.

This outreach strategy creates a framework for us to contribute to three of the priorities in Kew's corporate strategy, 'Our manifesto for change 2021–2030', in particular Priority 4 – 'Extend our reach'. It outlines how we intend to engage with a wide range of communities and individuals on common issues of social and environmental importance linked to plants and fungi, for the wellbeing of people and the benefit of all life on Earth. We have identified four key audiences to partner and strengthen our relationships with:

- **young people**
- **people from ethnic minority backgrounds**
- **people from lower socio-economic backgrounds**
- **disabled people**

Understanding the interrelatedness of these audiences, we will engage the appropriate partners and make sure our resources are effectively deployed.

Our corporate strategy sets out a commitment to Kew becoming the go-to place for anyone and everyone to explore how plants and fungi add value to their lives. We want to increase tenfold the number of visitors from presently underrepresented communities to the gardens as well as expand our reach beyond the gardens. This outreach strategy has identified four goals to achieve this:

- **Inspiring action for nature**
- **Connecting children with science and nature**
- **Nurturing tomorrow's environmental leaders**
- **Building rewarding partnerships**

We will engage individuals and communities onsite and offsite through an asset-based approach (i.e. drawing on the strengths and potential of communities) and partnering with them to develop new initiatives. We set out a list of outcomes we want to achieve, but ultimately the success of this strategy will be measured in our collective action to conserve, restore and use nature sustainably and equitably.

<sup>1</sup> 'RBG Kew', 'Kew', 'we' and 'our' refer to the whole institution of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, based at three sites: Kew Gardens and Wakehurst in the UK, and the Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre in Antananarivo. 'Kew Gardens' refers specifically to the Kew Gardens (London) site.

Community leaders networking during Community Open Week



# Introduction



Youth Explainers use games to raise awareness about endangered plants in the Temperate House

## Introduction

The mission of RBG, Kew is to understand and protect plants and fungi for the wellbeing of people and the future of all life on Earth. Kew's corporate strategy, 'Our manifesto for change 2021–2023' sets out five priorities for achieving this. Our outreach strategy delivers on three of these priorities:

- **inspiring people to protect the natural world (Priority 2)**
- **training the next generation of experts (Priority 3)**
- **extending our reach (Priority 4)**

Additionally, this outreach strategy will support and be supported by other strategies and plans across Kew, including the schools learning strategy; equality, diversity and inclusion strategy; history, equity and inclusion plan; digital strategy; science strategy; Living Collections strategy; and people and culture strategy.

As a world-class scientific institution, Kew has much to offer, including its expertise, gardens and collections, as well as the knowledge and understanding of environments, sustainability and biodiversity. 'Our manifesto for change 2021–2030' maintains that no one should be excluded or feel excluded from accessing Kew's assets, whether onsite, offsite or online. As such, we consider outreach in two dimensions:

- 1. Locally – encouraging people to visit our sites.**
- 2. Nationally/internationally – engaging people in their local communities and digitally.**

This strategy outlines our intention to significantly increase our engagement with people locally, nationally and worldwide. By providing a unique and exciting range of accessible opportunities for groups and individuals to learn more about our science, history, collections and horticulture, we will engage a diverse audience in a wide range of programmes.

## Our mission

**To understand and protect plants and fungi for the well-being of people and the future of all life on Earth**

These develop knowledge and understanding and inspire participants to become environmental advocates, taking positive actions for the conservation of plants and fungi.

We already deliver a wide range of learning and engagement opportunities involving staff and volunteers from across the organisation, including specialists in formal and informal learning, interpretation, digital, science and horticulture. In 2019/20, we attracted over two million visitors to our two sites, Kew Gardens in south-west London, and Wakehurst in Sussex, where much of our learning and engagement activities take place. We also engage with millions more online through our digital offer and national outreach learning programme, Grow Wild. The coronavirus pandemic has forced an acceleration in the pace of digital transformation, opening up new opportunities for Kew to make its assets accessible and useful to the widest possible audiences. Furthermore, we work in partnership with communities and organisations across the world to understand, protect and restore biodiversity. As set out in 'Our manifesto for change 2021–2030', we are committed to equipping millions of people across the UK and globally with the knowledge, skills and values to protect biodiversity.

### CASE STUDY:

#### Taking action for the environment

Kew Gardens' youth programmes attract participants aged 14–18 from London schools serving children from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Youth Explainers engage in specialist training and develop resources which they use to engage visitors in the Temperate House. The Youth Forum meets monthly to help design and run specialist events and activities at Kew, giving young people an opportunity to lead their own projects and make their voices heard.

'My own scientific and plant knowledge has expanded as a result of taking part in the programmes, and I'm much more aware of some of the wider issues surrounding conservation and biodiversity ... Before, I knew that reducing plastic use was something I should be doing – now I actually understand why I'm doing it.' Sinisha, Kew Youth explainer and Youth Forum member, 2019 and 2020.

# Broadening our audiences



## Broadening our audiences

While we have made great strides over the past ten years to develop our outreach work, we recognise that we have more work to do in engaging with some audiences. We have prioritised four audiences to engage and strengthen our relationships with. They are not mutually exclusive, and we expect overlaps across the groups, particularly when we consider intersectionality and common barriers. However, this will enable us to allocate resources more appropriately and provide a framework for evaluating success.

### Young people aged 14–29

We have introduced a Young Person's ticket (half-price entry) and membership to Kew Gardens for 16–29 year olds and to Wakehurst for 17–24 year olds. For the financial year 2021/22 young people comprised 4% of day-paying tickets (22,067 tickets at Kew Gardens, 1,363 tickets at Wakehurst). Our aim is to encourage many more young people to visit our sites, growing this audience to 10% of our day-paying visitors.

We also currently engage with hundreds of young people, through our Youth Programme and Grow Wild, who all express their concern about the future of the natural environment. We provide opportunities for them to gain understanding and awareness about plants and fungi, and new skills in communication, project development and leadership. Funding for youth provision across the UK has reduced significantly in recent years, which makes Kew's engagement with young people even more vital. We have developed effective models of engagement and we now want to scale them to reach more young people.

### People from ethnic minority backgrounds

Kew Gardens' and Wakehurst's current visitor profiles show that the majority of day-paying visitors (including members) are from white, middle-class sections of society. The percentage of day-paying visitors from ethnic minority backgrounds to Kew Gardens is 10% which is significantly lower than the average proportion of people from ethnic minority backgrounds living in London and the south east of England (25%). At Wakehurst this percentage of visitors is 4%, also lower than the average for the South East (9%). Our aim is for our visitor profile to be more reflective of society, particularly from our local areas.

Additionally, a person of Black, Asian or minority ethnic origin is more than twice as likely as a white person to live in areas of England that are most deprived of green space. We shall address this through promoting Endeavour (our schools' online platform) to schools and basing our outreach programmes, such as Grow Wild, in these areas.

### People from lower socio-economic backgrounds<sup>1</sup>

An estimated 13.4 million people in the UK, including 3.9 million children, are living in households with relative low incomes, once housing costs are taken into account (around 20% of the UK population, April 2022). Some groups are more likely than others to be in poverty and this includes part-time and low-paid workers, Black, Asian and minority ethnic households, lone parents (mostly women) and private renters.

The majority of paying visitors to Kew Gardens and Wakehurst (93%) are categorised as A/B/C1 (managerial, supervisory and administrative professional occupations) while just 7% are from categories C2/D/E (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations and unemployed). These latter groups are far more likely to be on lower incomes.

We have been redressing this through our Community Access Scheme (see Box, below) and various learning programmes and are now accelerating this through a £1 entry for visitors on Universal Credit, introduced in January 2022. From January to September 2022, the total number of £1 tickets sold was approximately 20,000 and we anticipate this number increasing. To support this, we will review our catering offer to ensure everyone can afford to take advantage of the options available.

In England, the lowest income areas are mostly urban areas in the Midlands, the North West, the North East, and Yorkshire and The Humber, while incomes in Wales and Northern Ireland and much of Scotland (14 of 23 regions) are below average. Through Grow Wild, we have engaged communities in 30% of the most deprived areas of the UK. Continuing to build relationships will be key to understanding how we can further develop effective partnerships and contribute to the government's levelling-up agenda.

**Kew's Community Access Scheme (CAS)** is a group annual membership for organisations that provide services directly to people who face physical, sensory, psychological or social barriers to visiting Kew Gardens independently. Members benefit from a heavily discounted rate (£36 for 60 tickets or £72 for 120 tickets per year). CAS members must be a registered charity, community interest company, community benefit society or other organisation providing direct services to people who face barriers to visiting Kew Gardens.

<sup>1</sup> The UK government measures low income as households living on 60% of the median income of UK households.

## Disabled people

Kew offers a reduced ticket price for disabled people and senior citizens (65 years or older). People who are registered blind go free. A person is considered disabled if they have a self-reported long-standing illness, condition or impairment, which causes difficulty with day-to-day activities. For the financial year 2021/22, 22% of our day-paying visitors were disabled or senior citizens.

It is estimated that there are over 14 million disabled people in the UK (around 21% of working age adults and 42% of pension age adults). They face significant disadvantage in society despite equality legislation. Proportionately more disabled people are unemployed than non-disabled people. More experience health inequalities and have poor access to transport and leisure services. Families that include a disabled person are more likely to live in poverty. Disability is not necessarily obvious or physically apparent and many disabled people are prevented from participating in wider society due to a range of barriers. A recent survey of Grow Wild and CAS participants showed that 9% were unable to access Kew due to disability. Developing programmes at Kew where everyone, whether disabled or not, can participate is essential.

Kew runs a Discovery and Access programme that offers monthly British Sign Language tours; Health and Wellbeing Walks for people with disabilities, health conditions and/or dementia; early access events for people with autism spectrum conditions; and learning resources. Our expertise in access will be vital as we expand our reach.

## The social model of disability

The way we interact with disabled people is determined by what we understand disability to be. At Kew we follow the social model of disability, a way of viewing the world developed by disabled people.

The social model of disability is based on the principle that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairments or differences. These barriers might include the attitudes of other people, organisational procedures and issues with the physical environment. Individuals may still have impairments and/or long-term health conditions, but using the social model to understand disability means that the 'problem' is not with the individual but with the interface between the individual and the world in which they live – putting the emphasis on society to identify and remove barriers to equality.

For example, a person using a wheelchair wishes to participate in an activity, but is prevented from doing so by steps at the entrance. Is this person disabled because their condition requires that they use a wheelchair? The social model of disability would say that the inaccessibility of the room is the 'disabling' factor. The person is 'disabled' by the situation. Appropriate access arrangements, such as a ramp at the entrance, would mean there was no disability.

**Adapted from Kew's disability terminology and etiquette guide**

Events at Kew are accessible to all visitors





Children participate in a BioBlitz during a Saturday Science Club for families at Kew Gardens

## CASE STUDY: Building confidence among young families

Achieving for Children (AFC) is a community interest company that delivers children's services across the boroughs of Richmond, Kingston, Windsor and Maidenhead. Laura Edbrooke is the lead outreach worker at AFC and says that for 80% of the families, the primary barrier to accessing Kew independently is finance. Kew staff ran sessions at AFC and talked to its Parents' Forum about Kew's Community Access Scheme, which provides low cost membership for community groups. Since joining families have started to visit. Laura says that coming to Kew Gardens has inspired parents and

given them the ability to replicate some of the activities in their local park in between visits. 'Kew has given them an appreciation of the simple things, like nature. It's definitely something that families are reinforcing in the way they're bringing up their children, through the types of activities they're doing together... Without Kew we wouldn't be reaching so many of these families who need support.'

# Purpose of outreach

To connect and engage diverse communities on common issues of social and environmental importance linked to plants and fungi, for the wellbeing of people and the benefit of all life on Earth.



## Purpose of outreach

Engaging and empowering people to understand and protect nature is critical to moving from our current path towards a more sustainable future. We also know that people are more likely to behave positively towards the environment and enjoy enhanced wellbeing if they have a greater physical connection to nature.

Kew is uniquely placed to offer both world-class scientific and horticultural knowledge, and beautiful, biodiverse gardens where people can learn about and experience nature first hand. It is incumbent upon us to exploit these assets and develop effective outreach opportunities for everyone.

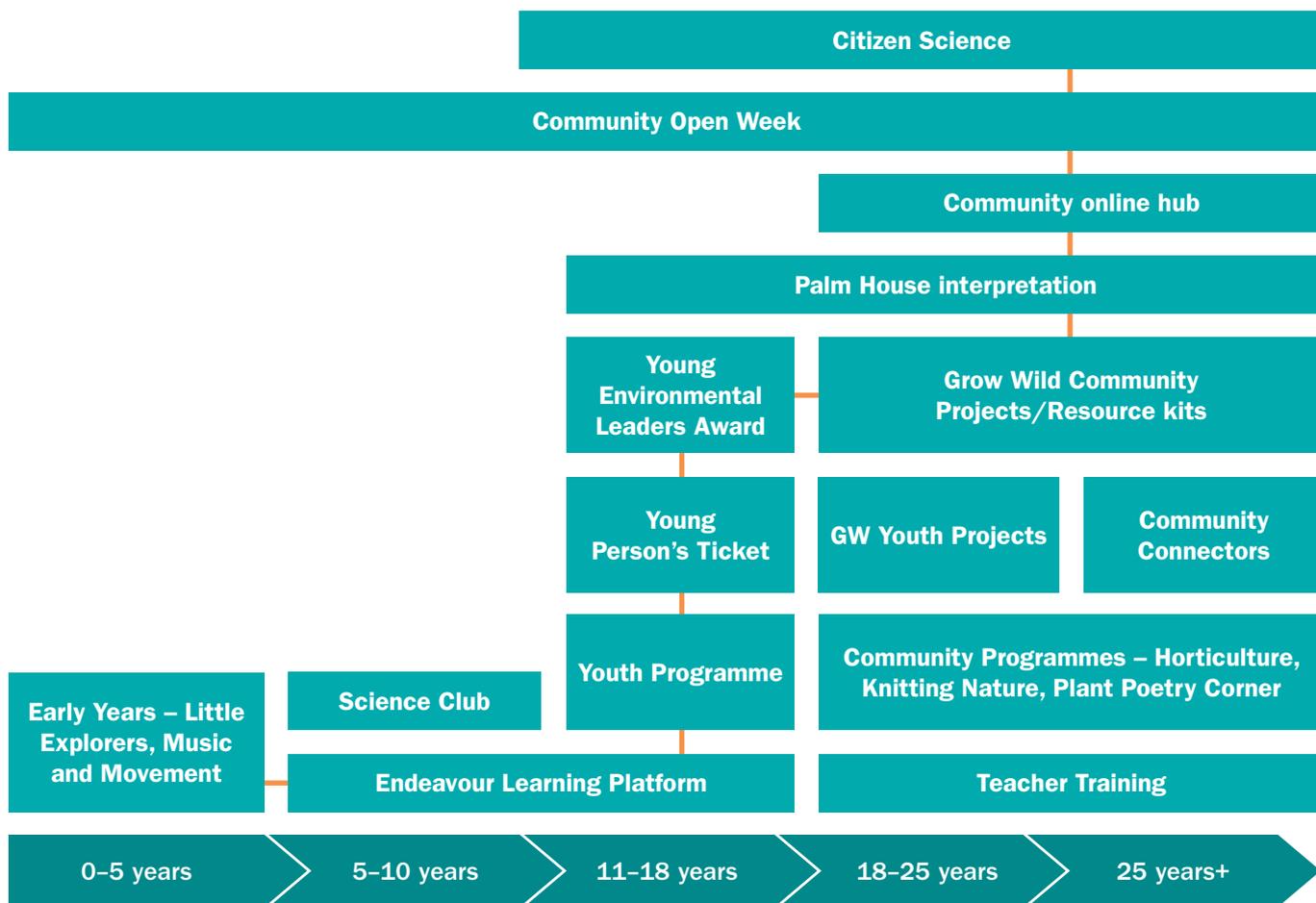
We will work with local communities, families and schools to enhance our delivery of accessible programmes that break down cultural and financial barriers to visiting the gardens.

We will also seek out partnerships with external organisations that facilitate connections with underserved audiences.

Our programmes will inspire people to support Kew’s mission and encourage behavioural change for biodiversity conservation. Participants will learn about environmental issues and gain knowledge and skills to help them engage with nature, and protect and enhance native habitats. We will prioritise activities that motivate participants to take positive and enduring actions for nature, and will support volunteering for environmental improvements such as habitat restoration and/or improving biodiversity.

**Figure 1. Experiential pathways and extending journeys with Kew**

We will create multiple touchpoints for engagement with Kew, from early years to adulthood, encouraging people to take advantage of the different opportunities available to develop lifelong relationships with Kew.



**Blocks:** Activities/opportunities available for different audiences  
**Arrows:** Ages for activities  
**Orange line:** Potential journey through Kew’s outreach programmes



A volunteer for community group Heath Hands in Hampstead Heath, London

## CASE STUDY:

### Grow Wild: Transforming spaces with UK native plants

Since 2013, Grow Wild has awarded nearly £1 million to support 349 community-led groups in the most disadvantaged areas of the UK to grow and celebrate native wildflowers and fungi. Groups transform neglected and ‘off limits’ or fearful spaces into places that are reimagined, made accessible and provided with a new sense of purpose, where engagement with nature is perceived as safe and enjoyable. Three quarters of groups take further positive actions for nature beyond the project, such as taking part in other growing projects, planting wildflowers and supporting wild bees.

All funded projects are led by voluntary, youth or community groups, bringing people together in a common cause through urban horticulture to improve their local environment and build lasting community connections. Grow Wild supports the groups by providing online resources, training and opportunities to network with other participating groups.

Each funded group reaches hundreds of people through inspiring ideas and events. These activities are much more than ‘just’ growing and include skills development, education and training for participants.

‘The most important change has been the development [of the] awareness of the need to protect nature, beyond just our site, [in] the nearby wider community and green spaces.’  
**Community project leader, England**

Wildflowers near the Princess of Wales Conservatory at Kew Gardens



# A participatory approach



Knitted pots of endangered plants

## A participatory approach

Across Kew there is an extraordinary wealth of knowledge, expertise and commitment to draw on for our outreach work, from science and horticulture to digital, marketing, interpretation and learning. Working collaboratively, we will continue to build our capacity internally and externally to develop new initiatives and leverage digital innovations, enhanced through the pandemic, to engage people with resources and learning opportunities.

We will take an asset-based approach (building on the strengths rather than deficits of communities) and put co-creation at the heart of new projects. Our intention is to collaborate with communities to learn from them and develop our offer. This will ensure outreach activities are specific to our audiences and driven by the communities with which we work.

We will nurture existing relationships and actively foster new partnerships with relevant organisations, to ensure the continued success of our visitor programme. This will allow greater flexibility to be both more diverse and more inclusive around whom we commission and collaborate with, and more adventurous in the scope of programmes created for Kew. Programmes will promote active participation and engagement in plant and fungi conservation and sustainability, bringing together participants with relevant skills and experiences to create ‘outputs’ that will impact their lives, such as community gardens, youth projects, training materials, resources and exhibitions.

Supporting communities to participate in the co-creation of storytelling through Kew’s collections will also be important. For example, the restoration of Kew’s Palm House is an opportunity to develop a model within which academics, peoples of the tropical diasporas, peoples living in the tropics, scientists and horticulturists can co-research and co-create interpretation together.

Through Grow Wild, we will continue our work with vulnerable and disadvantaged people throughout the UK, bringing them together to value and celebrate UK native plants and fungi, facilitating new learning, community connections and wellbeing.



### CASE STUDY: Getting your hands dirty, gardening for new beginnings

Maris participates in Kew’s Community Horticultural Learning programmes.

‘My journey with Kew started in 2019, when I became a participant on the basic gardening course, Foundation in Horticulture. When I first came to Kew, I was long-term homeless, and the project gave me a positive vision for the future. When you’re homeless, you sometimes live on a day-to-day basis, just to survive. I very often feel isolated. You’re in your own world, just caring about things like where to sleep, where to get food, and where to get a good shower, all those basic things. But then, when I come to Kew, I can meet people or learn ways to live differently and have a change of scenery.

‘Participating in this course gave me new insights into how I could change my life. I had the opportunity to visit Kew regularly over four months, and learn practical skills, gardening and about Kew Gardens in general, which was great. Whilst I knew about the botanic gardens before coming here, since they’re so famous, I had never been inside. It is quite expensive to come here to visit. But since coming to the allotments, I’ve discovered that there is so much science going on. I’ve actually set up a gardening business as a result of taking part in the programme. It’s already running, so I’m now self-employed as a gardener. It’s just a little thing, but it’s the beginning.’

‘Our intention is to collaborate with communities to learn from them and develop our offer’

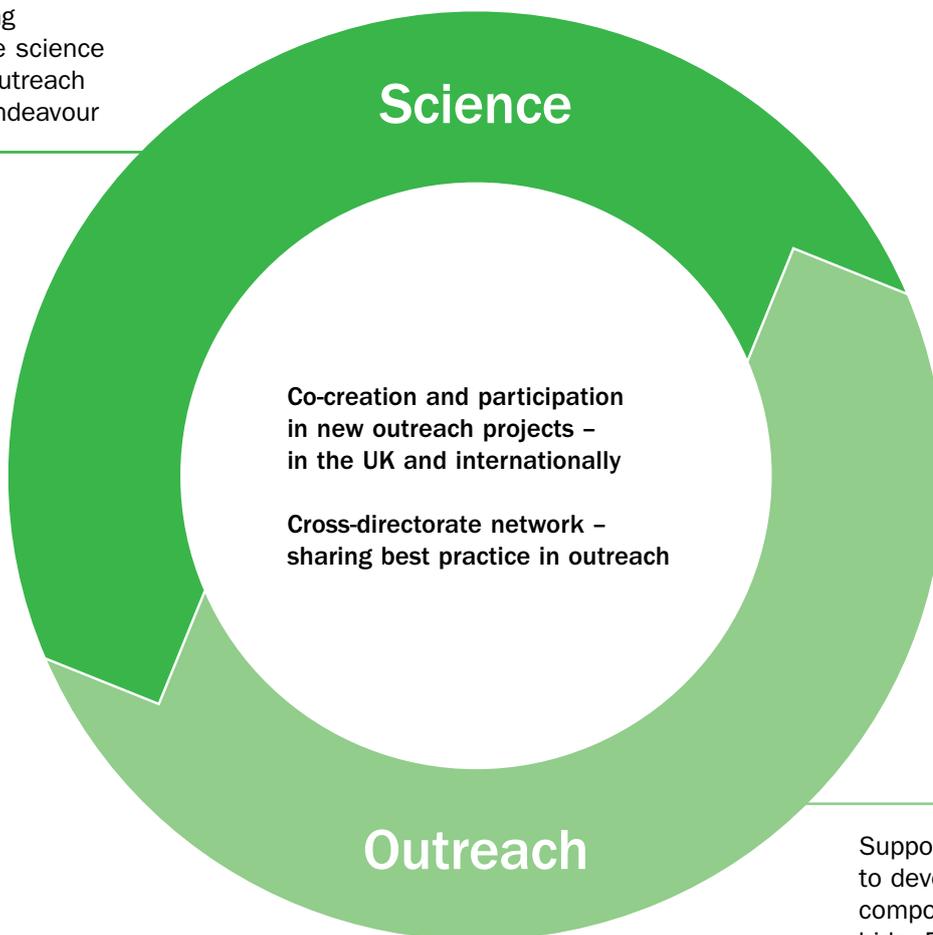
## Science in outreach

Kew’s scientific work makes a significant contribution to the continued global understanding of plants and fungi, the critical components of our life support system. The dissemination of this knowledge promotes scientific literacy, enabling people to understand the world around them, discuss environmental issues and make informed and evidence-based decisions. We will build stronger ties between scientists and outreach practitioners to explore how science can be further embedded in our outreach programmes.

Kew scientists work in over 100 countries and are committed to developing participatory projects with local communities to enhance livelihoods and ecosystem services (‘Science Strategy 2021–2025’, Priority 1). We will boost our outreach in science projects around the globe and create a toolkit to inform the planning, delivery and evaluation of outreach.

**Figure 2. Interplay between Science and outreach to deliver the strategy**

Support to existing projects to ensure science is embedded in outreach e.g. Grow Wild, Endeavour



Support for Science to develop outreach components for research bids. Provide a toolkit and training for scientists to develop effective outreach activity

## Our outreach goals

Protecting the planet is everyone's responsibility, and to achieve Kew's mission we need to work together, regardless of age, ability or background. Our outreach strategy identifies four audiences currently underserved by Kew (see pages 7–8). We will build partnerships with organisations and groups that serve these audiences to create new initiatives [labelled as 'NEW'] and expand our current work [labelled as 'DEVELOP'].

Our strategy identifies four goals, connected to priorities in 'Our manifesto for change 2021–2030':

1. Inspiring action for nature (Priorities 2 & 4)
2. Connecting children with science and nature (Priorities 3 & 4)
3. Nurturing tomorrow's environmental leaders (Priorities 3 & 4)
4. Building rewarding partnerships (Priority 4)

Working with different audiences across different goals, we will engage people on common issues of social and environmental importance, motivating everyone to take action for nature. Furthermore, our new Learning Centres at Kew Gardens and Wakehurst will enable us to welcome diverse communities and provide high-quality learning experiences.

### Building for a sustainable future

The new Learning Centre at Kew Gardens will support Kew to achieve three priorities of the corporate strategy (2, 3 and 4), the schools learning strategy and the outreach strategy. The Centre, which will be designed to achieve Passivhaus Certification and Net Zero, will house four schools' learning laboratories, three learning spaces, a seminar room and a learning garden. It will enable Kew to extend its reach to a range of audiences, including schools (Key Stages 1–5), communities, people with access requirements, early years and youth. Located near the Children's Garden and the Family Kitchen & Shop, the Learning Centre will be a vibrant focal point for everyone to explore and discover the importance of plants and fungi.



Youth Forum at the Community Open Week at Kew Gardens



A teacher at Buxton School in Leytonstone, London, a Grow Wild community grant recipient in 2021

## 1. Inspiring action for nature

**Aim: To raise awareness about plants and fungi and co-create programmes that will motivate the public to value and protect the natural world.**

There is widespread recognition that we are facing a global emergency, with internationally mandated support for governments to take action on biodiversity loss and climate change. Strategies for tackling these crises must be evidence based. Kew's unique scientific and horticultural knowledge, expertise and data are vital for policy development and decision making and it is imperative they are made as widely available as possible. Through public outreach programmes we raise awareness about biodiversity loss and the importance of plants and fungi. The synthesis of scientific and horticultural information and its dissemination in formats that are accessible to as wide a public as possible remain crucial to Kew's mission.

However, the provision of information alone will not solve the biodiversity crisis and we recognise that a more integrated approach is needed across scientific and social disciplines. Decisions are informed not just by facts but also by a wide range of values and goals. For example, our attitudes towards plants and fungi determine the decisions we make about their use and protection. It is our intention to bridge the knowledge–action gap through strengthening collaboration with our audiences and working towards solutions that are relevant to them.

We will do this by building on the success of Grow Wild, Kew's outreach programme, which has engaged over four million people since 2013 in achieving positive behavioural change for the environment. This next phase will involve collaborating with managers and owners of public and private land to foster in their local communities an awareness and appreciation of UK native plants. We will also engage the public in citizen science through the Wakehurst Landscape Ecology Programme. This programme is designed to inform and influence best practice in land management, biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions in the UK and beyond.

We have recently embarked on a globally significant initiative to digitise Kew's 8.5 million plant and fungal specimens, creating a complete catalogue of international collections and making specimen records and images freely available online and accessible to researchers worldwide. The aim is to unlock groundbreaking research that can tackle global challenges such as food security and biodiversity conservation. The undertaking is ambitious and we will set up a global outreach programme to address this urgent initiative.

An evidence-based approach is essential for developing outreach and we regularly engage in evaluation and reflective practice. Our aim is to carry out more in-depth research and, to this end, we will develop partnerships with universities to initiate and test new approaches to gain a better understanding of the needs of our audiences.

### Deliverables:

#### ON SITE

- **Citizen science programmes** [NEW] linked to the Landscape Ecology Programme at Wakehurst. We will develop citizen science programmes that seek to understand how we can better connect people to nature and provide useful data for scientific research.

#### OFFSITE

- **Grow Wild 2 – Space for Nature** [DEVELOP]. We will work with land managers to create green spaces that will enhance biodiversity and engage with local communities about climate change and biodiversity loss. This includes key services (e.g. fire and rescue services, ambulance services), places of worship (e.g. churches, mosques, temples) and universities. Kew scientists will monitor the change in biodiversity over time, in collaboration with local communities, to provide an evidence base for further work in transforming urban spaces.
- **Global volunteer digitisation programme** [NEW]. We will invite the global community to participate in digitising Kew's collections. They will gain a greater understanding of Kew's collections and take action that contributes to a global effort to protect plants and fungi.



School visits offer children ways to connect with science and nature

## 2. Connecting children with science and nature

### Aim: To remove barriers and improve access to nature for children and families

Experiences in nature are thought to profoundly influence children’s physiological, emotional and social development, making them more likely to value nature and develop pro-environmental behaviours. Changes in society, including urbanisation and our increased dependency on technology, are disrupting our relationships with nature and children now spend less time outdoors in nature than ever before. The reasons for this are complex. Research also demonstrates that people living in deprived areas have less access to green spaces than those living in more affluent areas, with people from ethnic minority backgrounds living in the most green-space-deprived areas.

Kew’s provision for schools and families already seeks to reduce barriers for children connecting with nature. We will build on this through expanding our current provision and offering bursaries for schools with a high (over 35%) pupil premium (a measure of disadvantage) to visit Kew Gardens and Wakehurst, providing resources for families with special educational needs and disabilities to better experience their visits, and taking our Family and Early Years programme outside Kew and into boroughs across London where young children have low access to green spaces.

Informal science-based learning is shown to support children’s connection to nature and Kew is perfectly placed to deliver this. Our programmes will focus on building children’s Science Capital – a concept that encompasses an individual’s science-related knowledge, attitudes, experiences and resources. The higher their Science Capital, the more likely they are to have self-efficacy and feel science is for them. Our programmes will also contribute to training the next generation of experts (Priority 3, “Our manifesto for change 2021–2030”).

### Deliverables:

#### ON SITE

- **Increased onsite provision for disabled visitors** [DEVELOP]. Through collaboration with disability organisations and Kew’s Access Forum, we will diversify our delivery team to involve staff, volunteers, facilitators and consultants with lived experience of disability. A new electric Discovery bus and staff member will be acquired to support visitors with mobility impairments. We will create an accessible map and social story for visitors on the autism spectrum and those who have learning disabilities for both Kew Gardens and Wakehurst. We will also create Sensory Story Sacks and introduce a regular sensory tour for families with disabled children.

#### OFFSITE

- **London-wide family science and nature clubs** [DEVELOP]. We will work with ten Children’s Centres across London to train 100+ leaders in how to engage children, parents and carers in nature-based play and connect with nature in their local neighbourhoods. Leaders will be supported to run activities at their centres and help develop early science skills, ignite children’s curiosity in science and build their Science Capital. Children’s Centre leaders will use this training to engage with over 2,500 adults and children during the year, and this will continue into following years.



A young child watering plants at Cordwainers Grow community group in Hackney, London



Young people from across London learning about ecology, biodiversity and conservation at Kew's week-long summer programme

### 3. Nurturing tomorrow's environmental leaders

#### Aim: To equip young people with the skills and knowledge to step into leadership roles for the benefit of the environment

Young people are entering adulthood at a time when the world is crying out for transformational and authentic leadership around climate change and biodiversity loss. As Albert Einstein said, 'we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them'.

We operate a thriving Youth Programme at Kew, empowering hundreds of young people annually, through training and mentoring, to communicate the importance of plants and fungi to the public using interactive games and art-based projects. We will reframe and expand our Youth Programme to incorporate a new Kew Young Environmental Leaders Award that will support young people in developing key leadership and advocacy skills by designing and delivering environmental projects. We are also launching a summer programme for 14–17 year olds that will provide an immersive experience in ecology and conservation, with young people developing their skills in identification and monitoring native UK plant species.

Through conferences and virtual seminars we will link our Youth Programme with other youth programmes in the UK and around the world, providing opportunities for young people to discover the environmental challenges other young people face, and to exchange ideas on how leadership knowledge and skills can be used to find new solutions and drive change.

Our online learning platform Endeavour provides free science teaching resources about plants and fungi for school pupils from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 5. Teachers use the resources to inspire pupils to develop their critical thinking skills, work through environmental challenges and consider careers in science. We aim to significantly increase the numbers of teachers and pupils participating in Endeavour, thus amplifying our influence with schools and highlighting Kew's role as a provider of plant-science education and developer of tomorrow's environmental leaders.

#### Deliverables:

##### ON SITE

- **Development of Earthwise, a new summer programme for young people** [NEW]. We will enhance young people's knowledge and skills in ecology, biodiversity and conservation using the sites of Kew Gardens and Wakehurst as 'living laboratories'. Earthwise will be aimed at young people who will benefit most from the programme, including those who have not previously visited our gardens or had similar opportunities in the past. Our aim is to engage 200 young people over the next five years.

##### OFFSITE

- **Generate future environmental leaders** [NEW]. We will launch Kew's Young Environmental Leaders Award, which will offer young people an opportunity to gain leadership capabilities and an understanding of the behaviours and competencies needed to drive positive environmental change in their communities. Our target is to present 350 awards over the next five years.



Plant Poets Corner encourages participants to use plants as an inspiration for writing poetry

## 4. Building rewarding partnerships

### Aim: To work with diverse partners to address mutual environmental concerns

Rewarding partnerships take time to cultivate but are key to achieving shared goals and lasting progress on protecting nature and enhancing wellbeing. Kew is privileged to work with hundreds of community groups through our Community Access Scheme and Grow Wild. Our partners encourage us to see and understand situations from different perspectives and enable us to learn and co-create more inclusive and effective programmes.

Our annual Community Open Week provides an opportunity for community groups across London and further afield to visit Kew Gardens. Groups engage with our plant collections and glasshouses and learn about Kew Science and Horticulture. This often leads to partnership activity, for example community leader training and co-creation of resources, which in turn empowers groups to visit the Gardens independently.

We will grow our relationship with key partners who serve audiences with whom we wish to engage, and we will be open to partners initiating projects with us that align with Kew's mission.

### Deliverables:

#### ON SITE

- **Expansion of Kew's Community Access Scheme (CAS)** [DEVELOP]. We will launch CAS at Wakehurst and expand CAS at Kew Gardens, increasing the numbers of CAS groups from ethnic minority backgrounds, lower socio-economic backgrounds, young people and disabled people by 10% each year.
- **A new model for delivering interpretation** [NEW]. This will be developed through co-creation (research, development and delivery) of interpretation with community groups for the Palm House restoration project.

#### OFFSITE

- **Establishment of a National Online Community Hub** [NEW]. We will build a digital platform to network community groups and partners nationally, provide a forum for sharing best practice and a means to offer training and resources on a range of topics linked to Kew's work, including UK native plants and fungi, green careers and wellbeing. Our ambition is to have 500 active community hub members by the end of 2027.

Participants enjoying a Sensory Tour at Kew Gardens



# Intended outcomes



## Intended outcomes

By delivering this outreach strategy, Kew will contribute towards the targets outlined in 'Our manifesto for change 2021–2030', achieving the following outcomes:

- **Numbers of visitors to the gardens, from presently under-represented communities, increased ten-fold** – from 22,000 (2021/22) to 233,299 (2030/31).
- **Visitor profiles diversified at Kew Gardens and Wakehurst** to be more representative of our local audiences.
- **Outreach strategy participants representative of target audiences** – at least 80%.
- **Increased awareness about the value of plants and fungi and the work of Kew** in science and horticulture (all target audiences) – 90% of participants.
- **Increased confidence, improved wellbeing and connections in the community** – gained by 90% of all target audiences.
- **At least 350 young people equipped with leadership skills** to address environmental challenges.
- **Positive actions for the environment** taken by 90% of all target audiences (eg. sowing seeds, growing plants, creating habitats for wildlife, raising awareness about plants and fungi and the environment).

For Kew Gardens we will benchmark our visitor profile against the percentages of target audiences living within our catchment area (London and the South East). For Wakehurst benchmarking will be against the South East or the UK as a whole, depending on the availability of data.

Audience	Kew Gardens *London/ South East (average)	Wakehurst *South East/UK
<b>Young people (16–24)</b> (Office for National Statistics – 16–24 year old population; Trust for London – age distribution of population)	23%	10%
<b>Ethnic minorities</b> (Office for National Statistics – population estimates 2019)	25%	9%
<b>Lower socio-economic backgrounds</b> (Poverty in the UK: statistics, House of Commons Library April 2019/20 – after housing costs). Social grade DE	21%	18%
<b>Disabled people</b> (Office for National Statistics – Family Resources Survey: financial year 2020–21)	15%	20%
<b>Senior citizens (over 65)</b> (Trust for London – population by age groups)	22%	20%

\*Figures drawn from statistics presented 2019–2021. They are subject to change over the next five years.

## Visitor profiles – 2021 to 2027

Please note it is not possible to aggregate percentages due to overlap between audiences.

Audience	Kew Gardens visitor profile		Wakehurst visitor profile	
	2021/22	2026/27	2021/22	2026/27
<b>Young people (KG: 16–29, W: 17–25)<sup>1</sup></b>	4%	10%	6%	8%
<b>Ethnic minorities<sup>2</sup></b>	10%	15%	4%	8%
<b>Lower socio-economic backgrounds<sup>3</sup></b>	7%	9%	10%	12%
<b>Disabled people (and senior citizens)<sup>4</sup></b>	22%	22%	18%	18%

<sup>1</sup>Percentage corresponds to relative percentage of all Day Paying Visits.

<sup>2</sup>KG – percentage extrapolated through Visitor Insights Programme focusing on Day Paying Visitors. W – estimate taken from an ALVA research report, 2021.

<sup>3</sup>KG percentage equates to relative percentage of all Day Paying Visits – social grade DE. For Wakehurst this percentage reflects social grade C2DE taken from an ALVA research report, 2021. We anticipate the new £1 Universal Credit ticket will contribute to a significant step change in the proportion of day paying visitors on low incomes with an increase of up to 3% or 4% in the first year. Dramatic increases are not expected in future years. Our objective is to ensure this proportion of our visitor base continues to grow, or at least remains level, as our overall visitor base increases over the next ten years.

<sup>4</sup>This percentage is based on 'concession' tickets – visitors with a disability and senior citizens (65+). While we cannot separate out this data, it is worthy of note that 44% of State Pension age adults have a limiting long-term illness or disability (Department for Work and Pensions – Family Resources Survey 2018/19).

# Communicating outreach



Young children discovering newts for the first time

## Communicating outreach

Regular communication about the deliverables in the outreach strategy, both internally and externally, will be vital to its success. We will draw up a Communications Plan in collaboration with Kew's Communications department to ensure all staff and volunteers understand what Kew is aiming to achieve through its outreach activities, the urgency of this work, the positive impacts this work has internally, and how everyone can get involved.

Externally, our communications about our outreach activities will be designed to suit the relevant audiences, taking a story-led approach. We will increase the diversity of people represented in our communications and incorporate more user-generated content. Collaborating with partners and community groups, we will amplify our reach through joint communications.

As Kew's outreach portfolio develops and we implement this strategy, we will showcase our work and share best practice with sister organisations and outreach practitioners. Kew's Grow Wild programme has significant experience of inspiring millions of people to take actions for the environment using innovative digital engagement campaigns, immersive experiences and practical support. At Kew, our communications, digital and marketing departments have outstanding expertise in creating impactful communications and telling compelling stories. We will leverage this to communicate our outreach work to generate excitement and engagement and bring people on a journey with us.



Mural painting with community group  
Garden of Earthly Delights in Hackney, London

# Delivering our outreach strategy



## Delivering our outreach strategy

Realising the ambition of this strategy will involve input and collaboration across directorates and sustained funding. Philanthropy will form part of the funding mix, and this will require us to prioritise and be flexible with timeframes.

We will coordinate our work to maximise our impact and, by including new and more diverse voices and experiences, help precipitate a cultural change within Kew. In turn, this will support Kew’s equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, which aims to create a diverse and inclusive place to work.

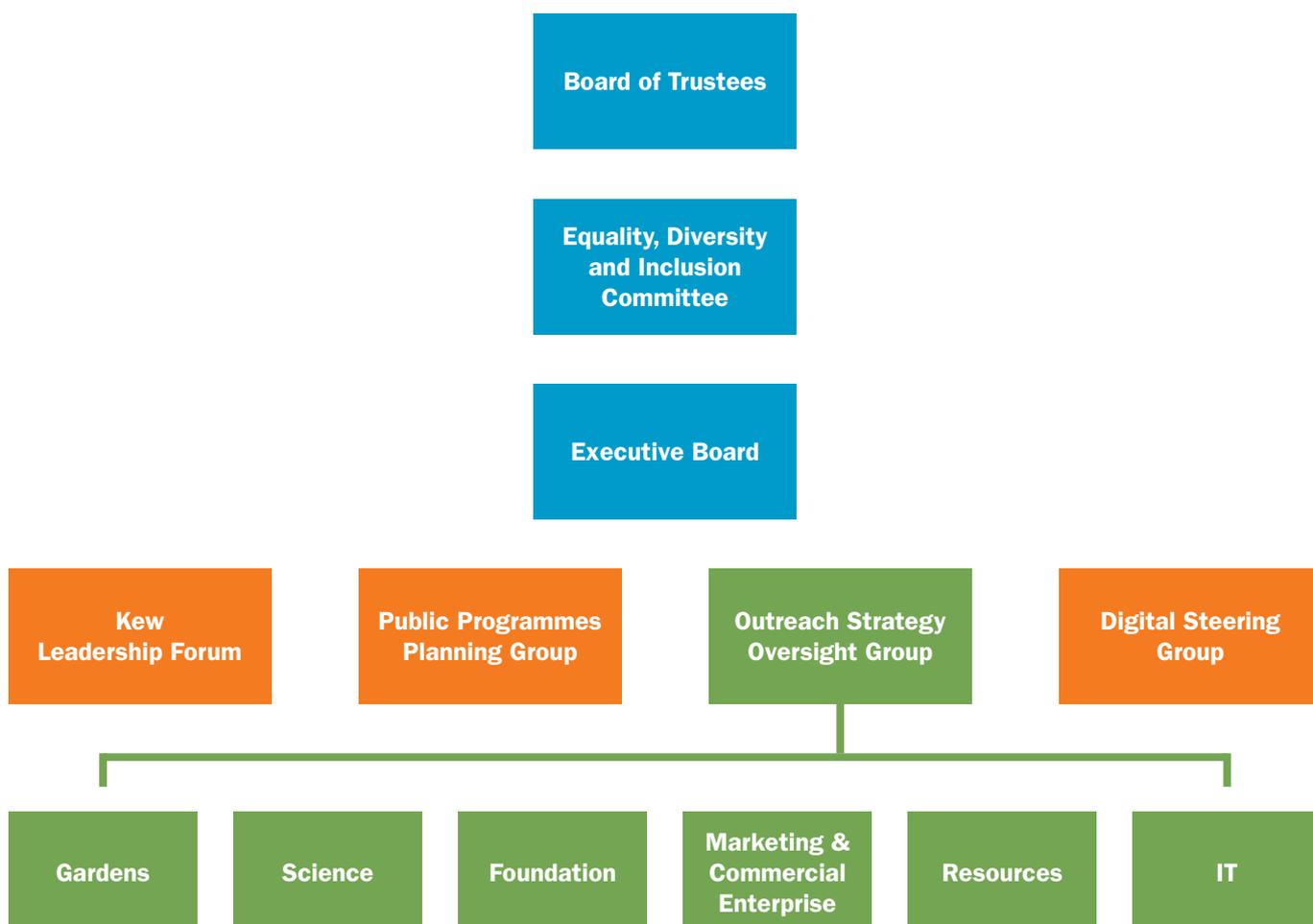
We will establish a cross-directorate group to drive and oversee Kew’s outreach strategy, reporting into the Trustee-chaired Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The group’s support will engender a cycle of outreach work that includes conducting research with our key audiences,

facilitating co-creation of initiatives, supporting pilot projects and monitoring and evaluating the success of outreach delivery against targets. Where initiatives are not successful, we will adapt our approach.

The group will also advise on developing an outreach toolkit and encouraging training across directorates to ensure effective and equitable delivery of activities. We will link with other organisations to learn from them and share best practice.

This strategy extends until 2027. We will conduct strategic reviews, adopting an adaptive management model where feedback is continuously used to improve our strategy where appropriate, to assess our progress and objectives and check the strategy is still aligned with Kew’s overall mission.

### Outreach strategy governance



# Modes of engagement



## Modes of engagement

The following table outlines a range of approaches Kew will select from to engage with audiences, using Science Capital as our overarching framework.

Approach	Description
<b>Science Capital</b>	A reflective framework to help people engage with science and acquire social experiences at home, in the community and at school that enable them to develop science-based attitudes and ways of thinking.
<b>Connecting to nature</b>	Opportunities for people to connect to nature through, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– spending time outside in Kew or further afield in parks and natural areas</li> <li>– activities such as sowing seeds, growing fungi and developing community gardens</li> </ul>
<b>Inquiry-based learning</b>	Encouraging people to develop questions they want to find answers to. Through researching, analysing and evaluating the subject at hand, people develop critical and scientific thinking.
<b>Citizen science</b>	Involvement of the public in scientific research to generate new knowledge or understanding – for example, through recording information and monitoring. More participatory forms of citizen science involve local people in all stages of the project, from developing the research questions through to analysing and preparing reports.
<b>Participatory arts</b>	Encouraging people to express themselves through the creative process (using media such as drama, music, writing, video and photography) and enabling shared ownership of decision-making processes that encourage dialogue, social activism and community mobilisation.
<b>Training</b>	Structured activities to enhance participants’ knowledge and skills to enable them to become more competent in carrying out an activity and/or engaging with local groups and environment.
<b>Networking</b>	Bringing people together on issues of common interest to exchange information and ideas and share best practice.
<b>Mentoring</b>	Supporting and encouraging individuals and groups to maximise their potential and develop their skills.
<b>Digital engagement</b>	Encouraging interaction and conversations, e.g. comments, likes, shares, co-created content, voting, rating – and continued engagement through digital platforms and social media.
<b>Co-creation</b>	Bringing communities together to engage with Kew as equal partners in the creation of resources, training, activities, etc.
<b>Asset-based community development</b>	Based on the strengths and potential of communities, asset-based development harnesses the resources, skills and experience of communities to determine the best action to take.
<b>Authentic inclusion</b>	Providing opportunities for everyone to share their views and know they will be valued.

# Existing outreach



## Existing outreach

Approach	Outline	Current Audiences Y = Young E = Ethnic minority LSE = Low socio-economic D = Disabled
<b>Grow Wild</b>	Award-winning environmental outreach programme, running since 2013, inspiring people throughout the UK to grow native wild plants and take positive actions for the environment. Initiatives include community and youth projects and training, distribution of seed and fungus growing kits and digital campaigns.	Y E SE D
<b>Families and Communities</b>	Activities run on and offsite with community groups (e.g. in Children’s Centres) in local London boroughs (Hounslow, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, etc.) with the aim of participants feeling comfortable and confident about visiting and participating in similar activities onsite at Kew Gardens.	Y E SE D
<b>Community Open Week</b>	Week-long series of activities onsite drawing in new groups and members of Kew’s Community Access Scheme (CAS). CAS provides services directly to people living within the M25 who face physical, sensory, psychological or social barriers to visiting Kew Gardens.	Y E LSE D
<b>Schools Learning</b>	Endeavour – an online platform offering digital resources for schoolteachers throughout the UK for Key Stages 1–5. Providing free family tickets to primary schools with a high (>35%) pupil premium (a measure of disadvantage). Offering bursaries to schools to visit Kew Gardens (>35% pupil premium) and Wakehurst (>20% pupil premium).	Y E LSE D
<b>Youth Programmes</b>	Youth Explainers – young people aged 14–17 from high pupil premium schools in London learn skills and develop resources to engage with the public at Kew Gardens.  Youth Forum – young people aged 14–18 across London develop resources and consult on activity contributing to Kew festivals and events.	Y E LSE
<b>Outreach within Kew Science projects</b>	Around 90 Kew Science projects based overseas include a component of activity with local communities that could be considered outreach. (Audit, Feb 2021)	LSE

# New and future outreach



## New and future outreach

Outreach goals	Existing outreach	New outreach	Possible future outreach
<b>1. Inspiring action for nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow Wild</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen science programmes with Wakehurst Landscape Ecology Programme</li> <li>• Grow Wild 2 project with London Fire Brigade</li> <li>• Global volunteer digitisation programme with Kew Science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National citizen science programmes linked to Kew Science</li> <li>• Grow Wild 2 extended to other Kew services, ambulance services, universities and places of worship</li> </ul>
<b>2. Connecting children with science and nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach to Children's Centres in local boroughs</li> <li>• Onsite school programme at Kew Gardens and Wakehurst</li> <li>• Endeavour learning platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability awareness training for front-facing visitor staff and volunteers</li> <li>• New Discovery bus</li> <li>• Accessible map and Sensory Tour</li> <li>• Sensory Story Sacks and sensory tour</li> <li>• Wakehurst accessibility audit implemented</li> <li>• Training for Children's Centre leaders in ten centres across London</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability awareness training for all staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Access audit carried out at Kew Gardens</li> <li>• Training for Children's Centre leaders rolled out to more centres across London and the South East</li> <li>• Virtual children's nature clubs</li> <li>• YouTube videos by Kew staff to help school pupils do research</li> <li>• Open days at Kew Science for children and their families</li> <li>• Roadshow to areas outside of the M25 (Scotland, Wales etc)</li> <li>• Identify potential Children's Champions</li> <li>• Endeavour extended internationally</li> </ul>
<b>3. Nurturing tomorrow's environmental leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Explainers</li> <li>• Youth Forum</li> <li>• Grow Wild Youth Projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthwise summer programme – two weeks in August</li> <li>• Young Environmental Leaders Award for Youth Explainers and Youth Projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthwise extended to Wakehurst and run during other holiday times – half-terms and Easter</li> <li>• Young Environmental Leaders Award extended outside Kew – nationwide, internationally</li> <li>• Kew Youth leadership conferences</li> <li>• Kew Youth deputation at international biodiversity/ climate change conferences</li> </ul>
<b>4. Building rewarding partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Access Scheme (CAS)</li> <li>• Community Open Week at Kew Gardens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAS extended to Wakehurst</li> <li>• CAS focus on strategy audiences (see above)</li> <li>• Community Open Week at Wakehurst</li> <li>• Establishment of a National Online Community Hub</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAS extended nationwide</li> <li>• Online programmes for CAS members outside Kew Gardens and Wakehurst catchment areas</li> </ul>



Children learning how to garden with community project Cordwainers Grow



**Statistics used in this strategy have been drawn from the following organisations:**

**Department for Work and Pensions** – How low income is measured in households below average income

**Equality and Human Rights Commission** – Report: ‘Being Disabled in Britain: A Journey Less Equal’

**House of Commons Library** – Poverty in the UK: Statistics, 13 April 2022

**Full Fact** – Article on poverty in the UK. Full Fact is a UK registered charity comprising independent fact checkers and campaigners. Their Board includes representatives of different political parties and viewpoints.

**Friends of the Earth** – ‘England’s Green Space Gap’, report published in 2020 exposing green space deprivation and how it is an issue of racial injustice.

**The Joseph Rowntree Foundation** – Various research reports. JRF is an independent social change organisation working to solve UK poverty.

**The Levelling Up agenda** – Briefing by House of Commons

**Living Wage Foundation** – Briefing: ‘Low Pay for Key Workers after a Year on the Frontline’

**Office for National Statistics** – Various reports including coronavirus and key workers in the UK.

**Social Metrics Commission** – 2020 report on poverty in the UK. The Social Metrics Commission is an independent, non-partisan organisation.

**Scope** – A disability equality charity in England and Wales, providing information and support and campaigning for a fairer society. N.B. **Government** facts and figures on disability date back to 2014 and have been withdrawn as official data.

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Free vegetables at the community garden  
and open allotment in Denmark Hill, London

