



# The National Funding Scheme

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## **UK arts and heritage sector to benefit from new digital and mobile giving platform**

More than 7,000 cultural organisations are set to benefit from the UK-wide roll-out tomorrow of DONATE<sup>1</sup>, a freely available digital and mobile giving platform designed specifically for the arts and heritage sector.

Following the success of its six-month Pathfinder phase with 11 partner organisations<sup>2</sup>, any UK arts and heritage charity will now be able to use DONATE to help raise funds through instant digital on-site donations via mobile devices. Almost 200 organisations – ranging from museums in Cornwall to The Pier Arts Centre in the Orkneys – have pre-registered to adopt the DONATE platform.

Launched by the National Funding Scheme (NFS, [www.nationalfundingscheme.org](http://www.nationalfundingscheme.org))<sup>3</sup> in March 2013, DONATE is the only integrated multi-channel giving platform in the UK. It combines QR, Near-Field Communication, web app and SMS/text giving into one simple interface and allows for the instant capture of Gift Aid – as well as the sharing of donor data (subject to permission).

The NFS shares the learnings and data insights generated from the DONATE platform freely with the cultural sector (see [www.nationalfundingscheme.org/culture-juice](http://www.nationalfundingscheme.org/culture-juice)), its charitable objective being to develop the efficiency and effectiveness of charities by promoting charitable giving, fundraising and donations. NFS publishes case studies and statistical analyses on its website and hosts regular 'Communities of Practice'. The meetings bring DONATE partner organisations together to share experiences and learnings from using the platform so the whole sector can benefit.

Average donation levels during the trial phase were £150 per organisation per month, with the average donation being £32 and individual donations ranging from £3 to £1,562.50. The NFS charges no monthly or joining fees and collects a 4% royalty on all funds transacted – lower than other online giving platforms.

The national roll-out follows the creation of a new 'self-serve' function, which enables organisations, via the NFS website ([www.nationalfundingscheme.org/portal/register](http://www.nationalfundingscheme.org/portal/register)), to launch themselves and their fundraising causes. The portal generates unique cause, QR and text-giving codes, as well as provides guidance and advice to make mobile fundraising a success. It also features templates for producing signage and marketing materials to help promote the fundraising causes on and offline. During the registration process, the NFS will verify each organisation to ensure it fits its criteria for support.

The NFS received start-up and pump-prime funding from the Innovation in Giving Fund (funded by the Cabinet Office and run by Nesta), Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, the Garfield Weston Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and a number of individuals. With the launch of the self-serve portal, the NFS expects to achieve sustainability in 2015-16, in line with its original forecasts.

**Moira Sinclair**, Executive Director, London and South East, Arts Council England, said: 'The resilience of the arts and cultural sector is a key strategic priority for Arts Council England and we see the development of fundraising capacity and platforms

as critical in achieving this. We have supported DONATE in its trial phase and are pleased to see its move to being nationally available. The learning from it, alongside other programmes such as Catalyst and the Creative industry Finance, is helping us to continue to support the making and showing of great art and culture across the country.'

**Sandy Nairne**, director of the National Portrait Gallery (one of DONATE's Pathfinder partners), said: 'By launching the self-serve portal, DONATE can now assist all arts and heritage organisations to set up their own digital giving facilities. For these organisations, DONATE will revolutionise their fundraising practice and create a vital new donor pool. The continuation of DONATE is important for the health of the cultural sector and I heartily endorse it.'

**Chris Smith**, Lord Smith of Finsbury PC and a DONATE patron, said: 'I am delighted to see the NFS develop and move from launch to a national, scalable solution so that all cultural organisations can benefit from its development and learning to this point. The launch of the self-serve functionality is a key step in its journey and one to be welcomed by everyone working to support our vibrant cultural sector.'

**Paul Cutts** – chief executive of the NFS – said: 'The launch of self-serve takes DONATE from trial stage to a national platform and is an essential step in our move towards being self-sustainable. We are hugely grateful to our funders (and existing arts and heritage partners) in supporting us to this point. We look forward to helping the sector innovate through mobile technology, building sustainable relationships with a new pool of supporters and generating incremental revenue in a changing funding climate.'

For further information and images, please contact:

- Paul Cutts, CEO, National Funding Scheme
- [paul.cutts@nationalfundingscheme.org](mailto:paul.cutts@nationalfundingscheme.org)
- Emma Williams, Partner Relations and Communications Manager, NFS
- [emma.williams@nationalfundingscheme.org](mailto:emma.williams@nationalfundingscheme.org)
- 020 3174 2276
- [www.nationalfundingscheme.org](http://www.nationalfundingscheme.org) or [www.don8.to](http://www.don8.to)
- Twitter @NFSUK

#### Notes:

- 1) DONATE is the public-facing brand of the National Funding Scheme. Wherever people see the DONATE sign, asking them to support a particular cause, they can easily make a donation through digital channels using their mobile device (phone, tablet etc). DONATE combines QR code, Near-Field Communication, web app and SMS texting into one simple platform, meaning people give through one recognised brand via multiple digital channels.
- 2) DONATE's Pathfinder partners were: Baltic (Gateshead); The Holburne Museum (Bath); Kala Sangam (Bradford); National Trust (Knole and Ham House); Octagon Theatre (Bolton); Phoenix Dance (Leeds); Almeida Theatre, National Portrait Gallery, Science Museum, Southbank Centre, V&A (London). A small number of other partners were introduced during the Pathfinder phase, including The Wallace Collection, Timespan (Scotland) and Ffotogallery (Wales). Among the 180 other pre-registered organisations are:  
**Scotland:** Pier Arts Centre, Orkneys; National Library of Scotland; The National Trust for Scotland; Scottish PEN  
**England:** British Library; Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust; Sampad, South Asian Arts Centre; Museum of London; Royal College of Music  
**Wales:** Welsh National Opera; National Theatre Wales; National Museum Wales; Ensemble Cymru; Eisteddfod Genedlaethol
- 3) The NFS is a registered charity specifically set up to help other charities in the arts and heritage sector to build their fundraising knowledge, skills and capacity using digital technology. NFS launched a pilot programme of the DONATE platform at the Southbank Centre on 27 March 2013.