



Helping people  
in horticulture  
**Perennial**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Date: MARCH 2021**

## **Perennial helps record number of people in horticulture in 2020**

**The charity looking after everyone working with plants, trees, flowers or grass experienced unprecedented increase in requests for support and advice due to Covid-19.**

*Contact Perennial for help and support on 0800 093 8543*

The charity **Perennial** helps people working in or retired from horticulture. Perennial can assist with financial support, benefits and debt advice, employment coaching, training and career support, access to online mental health support, a legal helpline and back to school support. As well as its range of frontline support services, Perennial provides services and information to help prevent people getting into deeper difficulty. If anyone working directly with plants, trees, flowers or grass has a problem, however large or small, they can pick up the phone to Perennial and know that the charity will make sure they receive the support they need - for themselves and their family.

The team understands the devastating impact of bereavement, ill health, homelessness, redundancy and family breakdown and appreciates that anyone can experience financial, mental and physical health difficulties. Life's challenges can be overwhelming, but Perennial is always on hand to provide guidance and support.

Over the past year the impact of coronavirus has seen demand soaring, with record requests for their services. The number of people helped increased by 25% compared to the previous year. The coronavirus pandemic led to an influx of people looking for advice and help from Perennial, particularly during the first lockdown when the helpline saw an unprecedented increase in calls of 400% in the first week. They received enquiries from people who wouldn't normally contact the helpline but turned to Perennial during very difficult times.

The coronavirus has devastated the livelihoods of many in horticulture. For Colin, who runs an award-winning fuchsia nursery in North Wales, 2020 was like no other. The sudden loss of income meant that the family were unable to pay for the basics. Perennial supported them with vouchers for food as well as helping towards electricity and gas for the first month of lockdown. Colin said: *“Overnight our family business for over 40 years was decimated. I had spent a lot of money growing the plants over the winter and with all the major flower shows such as Chelsea abandoned, we were left with no regular income and bills to pay. I didn't know how I was going to get out of it and with a young family to support I knew I needed help. Receiving the crisis support from Perennial was a huge boost. It took the pressure off when I was feeling overwhelmed. With food on the table and a warm home, I had time to think and explore ways to keep the family business afloat.”*

Last year Perennial helped people to access £2.3m in statutory benefits and £634,000 of debt was successfully written off or disputed. 45% of service users borrowed money in 2020 because of the pandemic so the picture for the year ahead looks uncertain for many. Perennial, along with the rest of the money advice sector, are preparing for an influx of **debt advice** once debt collection resumes having been put on hold for so long.



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The charity also provided £126,000 of financial support, with crisis and emergency support for food, energy, housing and day-to-day living accounting for over 45% of the help needed.



**Helping families with  
BACK-TO-SCHOOL costs**

**Support for school uniform and PE Kit now available**

Parents and carers will find it to give their children the best start at school. At Perennial we know that for families living on low incomes this is a huge challenge. Our team can help you to access local council support for school uniform where it is available or apply for grants.

We can support your family with help towards the additional costs of school uniform and PE kit.



**APPLY NOW**

To find out more and apply please visit [perennial.org.uk/backtoschool](https://perennial.org.uk/backtoschool)

If you or your family needs urgent help please speak to one of our team on **0800 093 8543** or email [services@perennial.org.uk](mailto:services@perennial.org.uk)

Our office hours are Monday and Wednesday 9.30am - 5pm and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am - 5pm.



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Perennial is a charity registered in England (1084080) and limited by guarantee. Registered office: 10, The Green, London, E15 2JF. Tel: 020 7481 1000. Email: [info@perennial.org.uk](mailto:info@perennial.org.uk)

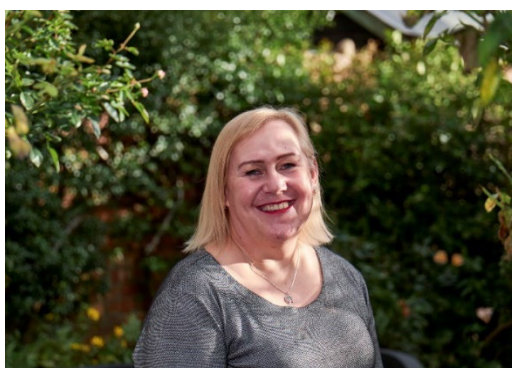
Perennial saw increasing numbers of working-age people with families struggling to meet their children's needs. In response, support for families increased in 2020, with 60% more families helped with the cost of school uniform through the **Back-to-School campaign** and financial support doubling. Lockdown and the resulting home schooling added to the pressure for families and Perennial was also able to support by helping families to get laptops and tablets so children can carry on their school work at home.

Martin, Head Gardener and father of two from Sussex said: “We were

*blown away by the support we received from Perennial - the charity has been our lifeline. They made sure we were getting the right benefits, gave us advice on how to deal with our debt and helped create a budget so we could take control of our money and work towards a more stable future.”*



New services were also launched during the pandemic, including a **legal helpline** for all legal matters such as tenancy, employment and relationship breakdowns. The challenges and pressures facing those in horticulture are very real. Research shows that one in four people working in or retired from horticulture are likely to experience mental health problems. We understand the impact poor mental wellbeing can have on lives and the ripple effect is often felt by family and friends for years to come. Perennial's partnership with **Togetherall** continues to support people with their mental wellbeing, with a free online mental wellbeing community monitored by trained therapists who are available 24 hours a day and access to online courses as looking after your mental wellbeing is now more important than ever.



Lesley\*, former Gardener from London said: “After bills I had £47 a month to live on, debt I couldn't repay, and had been left with mental health problems caused by my stroke. I felt worthless and helpless. My deepest low point was asking my daughter if she would lend me £20. I knew then I had to do something. Ruth, my Perennial Debt Adviser, listened to me. She didn't pity or judge me. She just helped me.”



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2020 was an extraordinary year for individuals and businesses alike.

Adapting to the changing lockdown constraints led to job uncertainty and money worries within the horticulture industry. Perennial believe demand for help and advice will continue as government furlough schemes, mortgage holidays and other support measures come to an end.

If you need help please get in touch, or if you have a colleague or friend in horticulture who needs support, put them in contact with Perennial.

Perennial's help and support is free and confidential. Call the team on **0800 093 8543**, complete the [Contact Form](#) on [perennial.org.uk](http://perennial.org.uk) or email [services@perennial.org.uk](mailto:services@perennial.org.uk) to find out more.

### About Perennial



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Perennial is the safety net for people in the horticulture industry and is here to help individuals working in, or retired from any job involving trees, plants, flowers or grass. The charity is responding to an unprecedented increase in requests for help due to the widespread effects of Covid-19 on the UK horticulture industry. Yet many of the events and activities the charity would usually be using to raise funds for its free advice and support services have been cancelled or postponed. An emergency fundraising appeal, [HortAid-21](#), has been launched to bridge the funding gap and offer some fun and easy ways for people to raise money for people in horticulture this year.

Perennial's helpline is operating as usual on **0800 093 8543** or visit [perennial.org.uk](http://perennial.org.uk) for more details. Or call Perennial's Debt Team of advisors on **0800 093 8546**, complete the [Contact Form](#) on [perennial.org.uk](http://perennial.org.uk) or email [services@perennial.org.uk](mailto:services@perennial.org.uk) to find out more.

*Perennial's Debt Advice Service is authorised and regulated by the [Financial Conduct Authority \(www.fca.org.uk\)](http://www.fca.org.uk)*

*\* Name has been changed to protect client confidentiality and photo is posed by a model*

### ENDS

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