

Universities for
Nottingham

Our Civic Agreement in action

Achievements 2023–2025



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Working in partnership for place



University of
Nottingham



Nottingham Trent
University



Integrated
Care System
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire



Nottingham
City Council



NOTTINGHAM
COLLEGE



Nottinghamshire
County Council



Nottinghamshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



Nottingham
University Hospitals
NHS Trust



Sherwood Forest Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



VISION
West Nottinghamshire
College

Vice-Chancellors' foreword

Universities for Nottingham (UfN) is a pioneering collaboration between our two world-class universities, working with local partners to drive prosperity, opportunity, sustainability, health, and wellbeing across our communities.

In 2020, amid the global pandemic, we became the first UK universities to jointly develop a **Civic Agreement**, setting out shared ambitions across five key themes: **community connections; education, skills, and employment; environmental sustainability; health and wellbeing; and economic prosperity.**

Half a decade later, our partnership continues to thrive, evolving and adapting to new regional landscapes and local challenges. Together with healthcare trusts, councils, and colleges, we remain committed to strengthening our collaboration and expanding our impact.

Having laid the foundations over the last five years, we now look ahead to the future. We will deepen our partnerships, embrace new opportunities, and tackle emerging challenges together, ensuring a stronger, more inclusive future for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.



Jane Norman

Professor Jane Norman MB ChB, MD, FRCOG, F MedSci, FRCP Edin, FRSE
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Nottingham



Edward Peck

Professor Edward Peck CBE, DL
President and Vice-Chancellor
Nottingham Trent University

Community connections

Our Civic Agreement ambition: **We will connect the expertise of our innovative student and academic community with initiatives that directly benefit local communities.**

Nottingham Students' Partnership drives students' active citizenship

The Nottingham Students' Partnership is strengthening student engagement in civic and social life. Working across both Student Unions it supports the Student Living Strategy (SLS) to **promote active citizenship and build stronger student-community connections.**

Now in its third year, the Partnership has built strong relationships with local stakeholders, including MPs, City Councillors, and community groups, ensuring students have a voice in local decision-making. Students have been encouraged to participate in local democracy and consultations through targeted election events. The Partnership has worked with the universities to support political engagement by promoting voter registration to over 10,000 students.

The Partnership continues to strengthen relationships between students and the wider city, ensuring students have the tools, knowledge and confidence to play a meaningful role in the place they call home.



"We work together to make Nottingham a great city to live, learn and grow in."

Shaping Nottingham together: the Student Living Strategy's impact

Students are part of the fabric of Nottingham. They bring talent, culture and new perspectives that add to the city's vibrancy. The Student Living Strategy (SLS) is an award-winning collaboration between the two universities and Nottingham City Council to build strong relationships between the student body and the city, reflecting the diverse needs of different residents.

The strategy aims to establish Nottingham as a safe, healthy and thriving city where everyone feels welcome to live, work, study and visit. Its priorities are to **provide the right balance and quality of student accommodation, promote neighbourliness and a clean, sustainable environment, and foster community cohesion and belonging.** By delivering on these priorities, the strategy is creating real improvements:

- **Meeting housing needs:** Better planning decisions are addressing student accommodation needs and freeing up over 500 additional properties for families over the next three years. Council tax exemptions are decreasing by 8% per year, putting money back into vital public services.
- **Civic engagement:** Improved admissions processes have helped an additional 23,000 new and returning students easily register for the electoral roll, helping students play an active role in their communities.
- **Cleaner, safer streets:** Employing a dedicated waste co-ordinator and student Community Engagement Ambassadors to manage cleanliness and support students and residents has promoted respectful behaviour, safety and sustainability. University-funded investments in off-campus patrols and new campus police partnerships have contributed to a 36% decrease in anti-social behaviour.

Nottingham's two world-class universities add

£3.8bn to the UK economy every year

They drive around

14% of the local economy

They support

25,000 jobs

across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire





Co(l)laboratory: Research with real impact

Co(l)laboratory (or Co(l)lab for short) is a groundbreaking research programme transforming how research is done in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Backed by Nottingham Trent University, the University of Nottingham, and the UfN partnership, Co(l)lab brings together researchers, local organisations, and communities to address local challenges.

With £5.1m in funding from Research England and an eight-year mission, Co(l)lab is recruiting local research candidates to drive meaningful, evidence-based change. By making postgraduate research more inclusive and ensuring the community is at the heart of every project, Co(l)lab is shaping a future where research works for everyone.



Eight-year mission
with **£5.1m**
Research England funding

Notts' Voice in Research: shaping local research priorities

Notts' Voice in Research is a Co(l)laboratory initiative that puts community challenges at the centre of research. Through interactive events and workshops, local residents, community leaders, and professionals contribute their knowledge and insights to help identify pressing regional issues.

Recent participants helped identify 16 priority areas covering topics such as access and inclusion in the local economy, the role of physical community hubs, and access to support services. A full overview of these priorities can be found here: tinyurl.com/notts-voice

These insights will shape up to 15 new research projects for the Co(l)laboratory programme. By ensuring the research aligns with community needs, Notts' Voice in Research aims to create meaningful and lasting impact.



Our impact 2022-24

Community engagement and partnerships

79
Community organisations

directly engaged, helping to inform and grow Co(l)laboratory.

28
Community research projects

co-created by community groups and academics, all funded through Co(l)laboratory.

17
Community priority themes

identified by local communities to shape our research agenda.



People power: Candidates, supervisors and support

30
Community supervisors and

56
Academic supervisors

(from NTU and UoN) supporting research development.

Inclusive recruitment practices
based on a competence framework have widened access and participation.

190
Candidate applications

received across two cohorts (PhD and Research Placements).

28
Research candidates

recruited from Nottinghamshire and surrounding areas.

Bespoke applicant support

initiatives helped more diverse applicants showcase their potential.

Education partnership, skills and employment

Our Civic Agreement ambition: **We will support disadvantaged communities across Nottingham(shire) to raise educational attainment, collaborating with major employers to develop future skills and ensure opportunities are visible and accessible to our local communities.**

MAtT initiative helps keep Nottingham graduates in local jobs

The Maximising Access to Talent (MAtT) initiative is working to keep more university graduates in Nottingham and the broader East Midlands. Currently, around 40% of graduates from Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham are retained in highly skilled employment in the region.

Developed to support the UfN ambition to improve the retention of graduates in the local area, MAtT is a partnership between the careers services of both universities. The initiative has gained strong support from businesses, local government, and Nottingham Partners and has led to several successful projects, including the annual Power of Partnerships conference and the creation of the Nottingham Early Talent Group (NETG). It has also helped grow the Digital Marketing Academy (DMA) and backed a Talent and Innovation UKSPF project.

These collaborative efforts have positively impacted student and graduate retention, supported local business development, and increased community engagement. There is strong commitment to continuing these efforts and expanding initiatives to ensure long-term success and sustainability.

Tackling Nottingham's digital skills gap

923 DMA graduates in 5 years

50% of participating agencies hired graduates



Science in the Park: bringing science to life for local families

Science in the Park has become a popular Nottingham tradition, making science fun and accessible for thousands of families. Held at Wollaton Hall during British Science Week, this flagship event continues to grow, offering more hands-on exhibits, engaging volunteers, and welcoming record-breaking crowds.

This year, all tickets to the free event were claimed within 48 hours, with over 4,000 visitors exploring cutting-edge research. From brain-scanning wearable tech to forensic fingerprinting, robot-building, and uncovering the origins of George the Gorilla, interactive activities captivated attendees of all ages.

University students played a vital role in the event's success, with 66 volunteers from Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham dedicating over 400 hours to engaging local families. Their enthusiasm brought the event to life—whether dressed as dinosaurs, leading activities, or capturing the day in photos.

Led by scientists and engineers from Nottingham's universities, the event provided a rare opportunity for families to interact with real researchers, ask questions, and dive into hands-on experiments that spark lifelong curiosity.

A true community collaboration, Science in the Park continues to inspire the next generation, fostering a love of discovery and bringing the wonders of science to all.

“Every year we offer more fun, educational, and engaging activities... it's a great way to showcase important research and inspire future scientists.”

—Maria Richards, Head of Public Engagement, University of Nottingham



Over **4,000** visitors

explored our cutting-edge research demonstrations





Working together to build inclusive workforces

Nottingham's universities, local authorities, colleges, and healthcare providers are collaborating to improve our collective local employment practices and ensure our workforces reflect the diverse communities we serve.

As some of the area's largest employers—collectively providing over 70,000 jobs—the Universities for Nottingham (UfN) Partnership is committed to increasing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across workplaces. To support this, an active network of EDI specialists has been established, bringing together expertise from universities, local councils, NHS trusts, and further education institutions.

The network meets regularly to share best practice, resources, and learning to create more inclusive recruitment and career development opportunities. So far, sessions have focused on:

- **Neuroinclusive workplaces** – led by the University of Nottingham
- **Supported internships** – pioneered by West Nottinghamshire College
- **Graduate and summer intern programmes** – developed by Nottinghamshire County Council

Future sessions for the network hope to focus on more about the 'Step into the NHS' initiative led by Sherwood Forest NHS Trust and the Nottingham City Council leadership programme for those with protected characteristics.

This shared commitment is driving change, expanding opportunities, and ensuring workplaces are more inclusive and representative.

The UfN partnership collectively provides over **70,000 jobs**

and is committed to increasing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across workplaces



Nottingham's universities join forces to expand educational opportunities

A well-established partnership between Nottingham's two universities is **breaking down barriers to education for young people across the city and county**, earning national recognition for its transformative impact.

Teams from NTU and the University of Nottingham work together to support local schools, helping more students from underrepresented backgrounds access higher education.

Key initiatives include the **Students in Classrooms** scheme, which places university students in local schools as literacy achievement coaches, the **Exploring University Together** family event, and a bespoke outreach programme for primary schools—helping to widen access across Nottinghamshire.

Their collaborative efforts were nationally recognised recently when both universities were **jointly shortlisted and commended for a Widening Access Partnership Award at the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) Awards**.

By combining resources and expertise in this way, this partnership not only strengthens Nottingham's educational landscape but also provides university students with meaningful opportunities to support local communities.

We delivered **1,700 outreach events and activities** to over **45,000 students** from primary through to post-16, in 2023-24



Find out more about our schemes

Students in classrooms: ntu.ac.uk/students-in-classrooms

Exploring university together
nottingham.ac.uk/exploring-university-together



Environmental sustainability

Our Civic Agreement ambition: **We will develop innovative solutions to achieve carbon neutrality, promote recycling, protect biodiversity, and build a cleaner, inclusive, and productive local economy.**



Wilding campuses: Restoring nature to Nottingham's learning spaces

A collaboration between the University of Nottingham, Nottingham College, and Bluecoat Aspley Academy secured funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to bring nature back to urban campuses.

Led by Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK), the Wilding Campuses project aims to create wilder habitats and improve land management to support biodiversity and threatened species. With the UK being one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, this initiative aims to demonstrate how campuses can play a key role in nature recovery.

Beyond environmental impact, the project will **empower students, staff and young people across Nottingham with practical skills and wellbeing activities**, helping them reconnect with nature while tackling ecological issues. By working together, the three partners are hoping to show how collaborative efforts can enhance natural heritage and create greener, healthier spaces for learning and working.



CLIMATE AMBASSADORS

Climate Ambassadors: Helping education settings lead on climate action

The Climate Ambassadors scheme offers **free support to nurseries, schools, and colleges to develop and deliver impactful climate action plans**. Funded by the Department for Education (DfE), the initiative connects education settings with expert volunteers and peer networks through regional hubs across England. Universities for Nottingham was selected to host the East Midlands hub.

The programme helps schools act on decarbonisation, resilience, biodiversity, and climate education—aligning with the UK Government's goal for all schools to have a climate action plan by 2025.

Volunteer Climate Ambassadors are recruited from universities, businesses, charities, and public sector organisations and provide expertise to support education settings to become more sustainable and better prepared for a changing climate. UfN partner organisations including Nottingham Universities Hospitals Trust and Nottingham College have signed up to the programme and helped the East Midlands to achieve its recruitment targets ahead of schedule.

As part of the programme, eleven students from the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University have been trained as Climate Ambassadors to help primary schools in Nottingham City. The Climate Ambassadors are working with teachers and students to spark ideas for their climate action plans. A key part of the scheme is giving young people the chance to take ownership of their actions.

In year one:

Over 100 climate ambassadors recruited

Over 165 education settings engaged

Sign-up or access resources

tinyurl.com/climate-ambassadors





Big boost for green chemistry research in Nottingham

A new £12 million grant will fund the Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) in Resilient Chemistry in Nottingham, supporting groundbreaking research into sustainable chemical manufacturing.

Based across Nottingham's two universities, the CDT will train over 50 postgraduate students to develop greener processes for industries including pharmaceuticals, fragrances, adhesives, and lubricants. The focus is on creating environmentally friendly, circular manufacturing methods that reduce waste and carbon emissions.

This investment aligns with the Universities for Nottingham's mission to drive carbon-neutral innovation, boost local economic productivity, and turn zero-carbon research into real-world solutions.

The funding is part of a national push to support vital research tackling global sustainability challenges.

£12m investment to train
50 postgraduate students

Student donations ease pressure on local waste services

An annual campaign helping students donate unwanted items is not only supporting charity but also reducing strain on Nottingham's waste collection services.

The **#PackforGood** initiative, run by the British Heart Foundation (BHF) in partnership with Nottingham's universities, the City Council, and student accommodation providers, encourages students to donate preloved clothes, furniture, and electrical goods instead of discarding them when they leave their accommodation.

In 2023/2024 alone, students have donated **25,831 bags of items**, worth an estimated **£405,065**, helping to fund lifesaving research. The scheme has also **prevented 206,648 kg of waste from going to landfill**, easing the burden on local waste services.

By making it easier for students to recycle and reuse, **#PackforGood** is driving sustainability, supporting vital research, and keeping Nottingham's streets cleaner.

Donations encouraged

£405,065

worth of preloved items

206,648kgs

kept from landfill



Our universities driving sustainability for the city

Nottingham's two universities are setting the standard for sustainability, earning **global recognition for their environmental and social impact**. NTU has been ranked the second most sustainable university in the world (UI GreenMetric) for the second year running and has held a first-class rating in the People and Planet University League for over a decade. Meanwhile, UoN is ranked 8th globally for sustainability and is actively reducing its carbon footprint. UoN's commitment spans carbon reduction, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable food initiatives, reinforcing its leadership in tackling climate change locally as well as globally.

These efforts bolster Nottingham's ambition to become the UK's first carbon-neutral city by 2028, create green jobs, and improve public spaces. By embedding sustainability into education, research, and infrastructure, both universities are driving real change—ensuring a cleaner, healthier future for Nottingham and its people.



Key partner contributions to CN28

- 30% of Nottingham City Council's vehicle fleet has been converted to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV).
- 45,000 new trees have been planted in the city.
- 15 buildings at Nottingham Trent University installing solar panels, 8 using biomass (for heating), and 8 are connected to the city's low carbon District Heating Network.
- Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust opened a new cycling facility at the City Hospital with space for 120 bikes, which is anticipated to reduce staff travel.



Health and wellbeing

Our Civic Agreement ambition: **We will collaborate to train and retain top healthcare talent and maximise economic opportunities in health, life sciences, and MedTech sectors.**

Nottingham's universities unite to drive health innovation

Nottingham's universities and healthcare partners are working together to build on the city's renowned history of medical breakthroughs and put Nottinghamshire's cutting-edge healthcare technology on the map.

Over 91,000 people are employed in life sciences across Nottingham, making it a thriving centre for medical devices, biotechnology, and healthcare innovation.

UfN collaborations have secured nearly £10m to deliver three major health innovation programmes in Nottingham over the next five years:

- **EMERGE project:** Funded by UKRI EPSRC, EMERGE (East Midlands Emerging RehabTech Growth Enterprise) will connect regional MedTech businesses with healthcare professionals, researchers, and the public to develop pioneering rehabilitation technologies — aiming to establish the East Midlands as the UK's 'RehabTech Valley'. Led by NTU in partnership with the University of Nottingham and regional partners.

Secured nearly **£10m** to deliver **three major programmes**



- **Two NIHR HealthTech Research Centres:** Focused on Rehabilitation and Mental Health, these centres will work with businesses to develop medical devices, diagnostics, and digital solutions to improve health and wellbeing. Nottingham is one of just a few cities nationally chosen to host two centres, reflecting its strength in innovation.

By combining their strengths, Nottingham's universities and healthcare partners are reinforcing the city as a centre of excellence in MedTech, attracting investment, creating local jobs, and generating new opportunities in healthcare innovation. This collaboration promises to benefit not only the region's economy but also improve healthcare outcomes for patients both locally and nationally.

Over **91,000** local people are employed in life sciences





Healthy Communities: building a food-secure Nottingham

The Nottingham City Sustainable Food Partnership is working to create a food-secure, resilient Nottingham. Bringing together public, private, community and university partners, it takes a whole-system approach to tackle food insecurity and create a sustainable local food system, ultimately supporting the health and well-being of Nottingham's communities.

Since 2022, civic and research teams from Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham have led projects that have:

- Mapped local food security.
- Identified how people engage with food support.
- Linked food security to nutrition and health.
- Developed a roadmap for local food procurement.
- Identified training opportunities in urban agriculture.

Aligned with the City Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the partnership works to promote sustainable food systems, expand access to nutritious food, and support community-based initiatives.

University partners lead five key workstreams:

- Food security
- Local food growing
- Local procurement (in collaboration with the County Council)
- Youth engagement in growing and healthy eating
- Promoting the region's food sector

Researchers have also contributed to the Nottinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Food Insecurity, offering valuable insights for local policy. Together, through ongoing research and action, the partnership is building a more inclusive, resilient food system for Nottingham.

“38% of adults in Nottingham City are food insecure and their intake of key micronutrients is inadequate for good health.”

Source: Nottingham Food and Nutrition Security Survey data 2023.



Students making a difference in health and social care

NTU and the City Council have developed an innovative approach to supporting the adult health and social care workforce needs across the city and county. The opportunity was collectively developed for students to undertake part-time work in this sector alongside their studies, but to also give back to the communities they often live within.

Initiative highlights:

- **CareConnect event:** Led by NTU's Uni-tempers team, this event included a presentation by 'Skills for Care' on the 'soft skills' required for a job in this area, and networking with employers.
- **Part-Time Jobs Fair:** Over 2,000 students attended, exploring part-time job opportunities in the health and social care sector.



“Since September 2024, 120 part-time AHSC vacancies were actively promoted via the NTU JobShop, with over 13,000 students engaging with the advertisements”



Economic prosperity

Our Civic Agreement ambition: **We will drive inclusive, sustainable economic growth, making Nottingham(shire) a thriving place to live, work, study, and invest, while proudly advocating for our people and community.**

Boosting business innovation in Nottingham

Working in partnership with Nottingham City Council, Nottingham's two universities have teamed up to support local businesses through the **Talent and Innovation Business Support Programme**. Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), this initiative helps local businesses tap into university expertise, research, and graduate talent.

The programme offers **Talent Grants** to subsidise hiring graduates or students to work on a short-term project and Innovation Vouchers to access expert consultancy through specialist university centres, including food innovation, chemistry, aerospace, and design.

After successfully supporting 67 Nottingham-based businesses during the first phase of the initiative, the programme was awarded funding for a further year, to expand the offer to include a broader range of businesses.

60+ local businesses supported



Strengthening partnerships for the East Midlands' future

The UfN Civic Agreement provides a framework for partners to collaborate on key local priorities and champion our communities. This shared commitment has strengthened relationships between organisations, enhancing our ability to work together effectively.

Our collaboration has fostered a positive environment for the formation of the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority (EMCCA). EMCCA will oversee economic development, regeneration, adult education and skills, transport, and housing, ensuring long-term regional growth.

In addition to supporting the partnership working necessary for EMCCA to flourish, the universities have worked together on:

- The creation of the East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ), a designated hub for green industries and advanced manufacturing. EMIZ offers business rates retention and tax reliefs to attract investment, drive innovation, and create high-quality jobs.
- The UfN Expert Advisory Panel (EAP), which provides evidence-based, cross-disciplinary insights to local leaders. Since its launch in 2022, the panel has addressed key challenges, including post-pandemic recovery, health and care demand, and resilience strategies to help inform local policymaking.

The strong foundations built through the UfN partnership will continue to play a vital role in supporting EMCCA's success and long-term impact.

“Through collaboration and shared commitment, we are driving the future success of the East Midlands.”



Scan to find out more
or, visit:
eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk

125 creative and digital local businesses

informed the research

New initiative to boost Nottingham's creative and digital sector

A new partnership is set to drive growth in Nottingham's creative and digital industries (CDIs), helping local businesses overcome challenges and attract investment.

The **Nottingham Creative and Digital Industries Initiative**—a collaboration between Nottingham Trent University, the University of Nottingham, and Nottingham City Council—aims to understand the needs of CDIs, remove barriers to growth, and advocate for further support.

Through research with 125 local businesses, the initiative has identified key challenges, including the impact of the pandemic, inflation, and rising costs. This insight will help shape policies that support the sector.

Building on these findings, the **Create Growth N2** programme will provide creative tech (CreaTech) businesses with access to private investment and expert advice to help them scale up. This initiative strengthens Nottingham's position as a thriving hub for creative and digital industries.



City as Lab: Digital and data innovation for Nottingham's future

City as Lab is transforming Nottingham into a hub of data-driven innovation using award-winning mapping tools to tackle real-world challenges. It brings together researchers, communities and local partners to collaborate in place-led problem-solving, policy and planning — testing new ideas to improve daily life.

City as Lab projects connect health, economic, social, education, and environmental data to help create smarter policies, better public services, and a more sustainable city. By visualising local

data in new ways, leaders and residents can make informed decisions about issues that matter to them.

Supporting this work is the new Nottingham Urban Room, a welcoming space where people can learn about the city's past, present, and future, and have a say in shaping it. Through events co-hosted with Nottingham City Council and Universities for Nottingham, communities can access the space and influence thinking and change.

More details about the data tools, Nottingham Urban Room and how to get involved in future events are available here:

nottingham.ac.uk/city-as-lab/get-involved



BBC Concert Orchestra partnership brings world- class music to Nottingham

A groundbreaking partnership between the BBC Concert Orchestra and Universities for Nottingham is meeting our commitment to support and amplify the development of Nottinghamshire's cultural landscape. Launched in 2023, the three-year collaboration gives the area unique access to one of the UK's top broadcast orchestras, opening doors to music education, composition, and production.

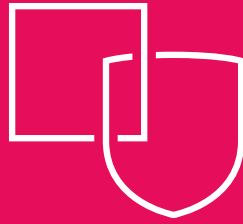
The initiative aims to reach currently underserved communities through education programmes, workshops, performances and national projects like the BBC Young Composer Awards. Large-scale performances have attracted large audiences and served as a showcase for regional talent, while planned research collaborations are aiming to explore music's social impact and create innovative audience experiences.

By blending music, education, and research, this collaboration will grow and inspire the next generation of those working in the music industry and strengthen Nottinghamshire's creative scene.

“This partnership between the BBC Concert Orchestra and the universities of Nottingham builds on the existing relationship between the orchestra and the city. What we have planned for this partnership is ambitious and incredibly exciting, and demonstrates the vital role of music in education. I look forward to working with the teams in Nottingham and sharing our world class music making with students and local communities.”

—Simon Webb, Head of BBC Orchestras and Choirs





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