



University of
Nottingham
Institute for Policy and Engagement

Institute for Policy and Engagement

Annual Report 2022–23

**This is the place that
is shaping the future**



Key facts and figures

The Institute connects Nottingham's world-leading researchers with the public and policymakers to share insight and solve problems. Over the last year, our policy and public engagement teams have provided advice, support, training, funding and much more to researchers across the University.

Through these partnerships we tackle together the most compelling challenges locally, nationally and globally. This review picks out some of the highlights of a busy 12 months and looks ahead to what to expect next year.

Key stats between Sep 2022–Aug 2023



Supported over

100

academics to reach policy and public audiences



Trained over

400

colleagues online and face to face



Collaborated with over

140

external partners, ranging from community groups on our doorstep here in Nottingham to international organisations operating across the globe



Engaged over

22k

people through our public events programme



Distributed over

£500k

worth of funding to help build partnerships for impact



Generated over

400k

engagements through our podcast, blogs and social media to share Nottingham's world-changing research

What we do...

Rewarding success

Our annual Impact and Engagement Awards have become a fixture of the University calendar, and this year we marked the fifth anniversary with a dinner to show how much the work of researchers - and the professional services staff who work with them - is valued by the University.

The keynote was given by Professor Sarah Sharples, Chief Scientific Advisor at the Department for Transport, giving some great insights into the world of policy. Winners included an innovative coproduced research study investigating the experiences of people with tics and Tourette Syndrome (TS) trying to access healthcare in the UK, as well as Professor Alex Trautrimis for his partnership with the British Standards Institute (BSI), the UK's national standards body, to develop the world's first national standard against modern slavery.

Developing expertise

This year saw us launch an online training offer via Moodle, as well as extending our competitive development programmes.

Our new Policy Impact Accelerator Programme (PIAP) ran alongside the Policy Impact Pathways Programme piloted last year. These offered ten early and midcareer academics from across the university a development package, including financial and consultancy support with a policy impact project. Projects ranged from developing engagement with religious communities in peacebuilding, to policy recommendations for improving water quality in Vietnam, to advising Local Authorities on how to tackle modern slavery in care settings (see following page).

Building networks

We facilitate partnerships between academics, policymakers and the general public.

These include the Nottingham Expert Advisory Panel, a collaboration with Nottingham Trent University which convenes academics from both universities to collaborate with local policymakers on pressing questions such as emergency response and levelling up.

We also partnered with the Institute for Government to produce a report on the art of devolution deals, drawing on experiences nationwide. At a well-attended launch, prospective mayoral candidates for the East and West Midlands spoke alongside Nottingham's Professor Sarah Hall. The report has been described as 'a handbook for making deals work'.

Local challenges are also being raised and addressed through the U4N Co(l)aboratory doctoral training partnership. We are proud to be supporting the delivery team, contributing to the programme's governance and raising awareness of the opportunities available.



This has been one of the most straightforward and enjoyable partnerships we've worked on.'

David Tripepi-Lewis, IFG Director of Partnerships and Development

Supporting innovation

Research England funding allowed us to support vital research across policy and public engagement.

We supported 16 innovative public engagement projects, following a competitive call which engaged the public directly in the design and delivery of research. These included co-curated sound walks; investigating best practice for refugee education; and gathering previously untold histories associated with Nottingham's cave system.

We funded a further 24 projects around policy impact, working with researchers from across the university on collaborations with government departments, local councils, and numerous other organisations to ensure that our expert research informs key discussions and decisions.



Case studies: Policy

CAPE: leading across the sector

We are proud to be part of the Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement (CAPE) collaboration to innovate and identify what works in connecting policy with research across the sector. This year we supported six 'CAPE Fellows' from the policy sector (matched with 28 UoN staff members); launched fellowships for four researchers to partner with small charities in policy-facing roles; and supported three collaborative projects which leverage the combined strengths of policy and academia.

SHaping Sustainable Futures Hub

The Institute launched the SSF Hub in April, an online resource dedicated to social sciences research around climate change and sustainability. It features research from across the university's Faculty of Social Sciences in an accessible format aimed at policymakers and the public. The project demonstrates that achieving net zero is as much a social science challenge as a technical one and shows how Nottingham's world-leading research addresses that need.



[This Hub] is an exciting example of how public funding allows researchers from across disciplines to come together and engage with our partners to tackle complex issues.'

Professor Neil Crout, former Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange



Evidence Week 2023

The Institute was the lead sponsor for Evidence Week in Parliament, a week of activities run annually by Sense about Science to showcase research evidence for parliamentarians. Professor John Gathergood presented his Track the Economy tool, which generated huge interest including discussions with the House of Commons library.



Evidence week gives MPs a vital opportunity to get cutting-edge research insights and equip their offices with the skills to handle data and evidence on complex issues.'

Camilla Arvidsson, Programmes Officer, Sense about Science

Decolonising Impact

We have worked with partners in the Global South to explore how researchers can engage and advise on policy without replicating imbalances of power. Building on our 2022 conference, we continued to lead dialogue and practice including: working with Professor Nicola Pitchford on an innovative new policy fellowship scheme in Malawi; funding Global South-focused projects; and conferences including Nottingham's Research Culture Conference, Warwick's International Research Culture Conference and the ICare4Justice summit in Connecticut.

Making a difference

We have supported many academics to make a difference in the real world, in projects ranging from advising Local Authorities in England how they can tackle modern slavery, to launching a national Charter for Inclusive Entrepreneurship, to supporting stakeholder-led dialogue on peacebuilding in Liberia and the welfare of garment workers in Cambodia.



Case studies: Public Engagement

Nottingham's UNICEF Child Friendly City bid

We continued to work with Nottingham City Council in their bid to make Nottingham a recognised UNICEF Child Friendly City. The Institute organised workshops enabling council, UNICEF UK, UoN and NTU representatives to jointly explore themes. These identified numerous crossover opportunities and suggested partnerships. Our expertise continues to contribute to action planning and delivery.



The convening power of the Institute is highly valuable to the development of the external collaborations on which Unicef UK's Child Friendly City initiative depends.'

Jon Rea, Research, Engagement and Consultation Manager, Nottingham City Council



Engaging with communities

In preparation for the upcoming opening of Nottingham's new central library we piloted a range of activities, showcasing research in different locations. A key example was the HeArt project, a collaboration between City Arts and the Biodiscovery Institute taking stem cell research to a younger audience. The project features in the official launch of the new library, where participants will help create an exhibition sharing the research outcomes.



Festivals

The Institute led and co-produced a series of exciting festivals over the year, which reached an audience of over 20,000 people. These included Science in the Park, the Festival of Social Science and the Festival of Science and Curiosity, taking research off campus and engaging new audiences. New for 2023 was our partnership with the Green Hustle collective, expanding our portfolio whilst creating new opportunities to contribute to tackling the climate crisis.



Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) 2023

The third round of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) saw the University of Nottingham rise to the top quintile in the Public and Community Engagement category of the KEF, above the average for our peer Universities. This success reflects activity across the University and is a wonderful recognition of the progress that has been made at Nottingham, from improved governance and infrastructure to long-term partnerships that embed us within communities. The Institute was pleased to play a key role in this return.



Looking forward to 2023–24

The last year has been a busy and exciting period for the Institute, introducing a new number of new challenges and key milestones. As we look ahead to next year, however, it's clear that even better things are still to come!

This coming year will see the expansion of our team with the addition of a new Research Advocacy team to run university-wide campaigns raising awareness of and public support for our key research priorities.

We will also be launching a high-profile policy commission on the Zero Carbon economies of the future in 2024. We're also very excited to be working with Professor Peter Chapman on our new initiative to develop a pilot citizen-engaged policy impact project, focusing on road safety in Nottingham.

We recently applied for the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement's highly prestigious Watermark award. We will find out what level of award we have secured this December and take this knowledge forwards to ensure continual improvement across the institution.

We will be expanding our family offer, with a series of family friendly lectures, developed in partnership with Lakeside Arts. Our trial event in July 2023 was a huge success, with over 150 people joining us to learn more about the Apollo moon landing.

2024 will also see us share results from the Youth Trends survey we are conducting in partnership with Nonsuch Studios, as we help give young people across Nottinghamshire a voice.

Our existing intensive training offer for academic staff will expand to incorporate a new civic impact strand. We will also be expanding our online offer, allowing staff to access training on the basic principles of policy and public engagement at a time to suit them best.

Thank you to everyone who has worked with us over the last year to ensure that Nottingham's research successfully reaches beyond the confines of the university grounds to deliver real impact. We look forward to another year of successful partnerships, collaboration, and research!

