Progress towards our Civic Agreement

Working in partnership for place
Vice-Chancellors’ foreword

Universities for Nottingham (UFN) is a pioneering collaboration, bringing together the combined strength of Nottingham’s two world-class universities for the benefit of our place, people, and communities. Working with local partners, we aim to improve levels of prosperity, opportunity, sustainability, health and wellbeing for residents and the communities that unite us.

In partnership with eight local anchor institutions—the healthcare trusts and the Integrated Care Board, our City and County Councils, the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership and Vision West Nottinghamshire College—we have developed a Civic Agreement that maps out a series of shared ambitions for our place. The first Civic Agreement launched in July 2020 amidst the flux of a global pandemic; at a point when it had never been more important to pull together for our people and place.

We refreshed those ambitions in early 2022 as we began to emerge from the pandemic. The renewed Civic Agreement sets out our ambitions across five themes: community connections; education partnership, skills and employment; environmental sustainability; health and wellbeing; and economic prosperity.

We are very much at the beginning of what we hope will be a constantly evolving partnership journey, but we are immensely proud of the way the partnership has begun to take shape. We are motivated by the challenges ahead and heartened by the clear evidence that working together can have real, lasting benefits.

This review is far from exhaustive. It does not reflect the many hours of dedication from colleagues across our partnership to strengthen links and drive forward our commitments and collaborations. However, we do hope it gives a flavour of what we are working on together for our place, people, and communities.

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

Professor Shearer West CBE, DL
President and Vice-Chancellor,
University of Nottingham

Contents

Vice-Chancellors’ foreword 3
Progress against our Civic Agreement themes 4
Community connections 4
Education partnership, skills and employment 8
Environmental sustainability 12
Health and wellbeing 16
Economic prosperity 20
Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement 24
Community connections

We will better connect the expertise and energy of our innovative, creative student and academic community with initiatives that directly benefit our local communities.

Amanda Sullivan, Chief Executive of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System

“We’re really excited about this project. It will help us bring the latest research, evidence and knowledge from the universities into the way that we design health services to better meet the needs of our local population.”

Supporting local people to undertake research to improve the lives of local communities: Co(l)laboratory

The research taking place within our universities is a key resource for our area, and we are keen to align it with local challenges. Launched in October 2022, the £5.1m Co(l)laboratory project is a new way for local organisations and individuals to identify challenges and work with both universities to direct research priorities.

Over the next eight years, the Co(l)laboratory programme of work will train 50 PhD students and provide 25 paid ‘Citizen Scientist’ research placements, all working on solutions to regional issues.

The first group of projects have been developed in collaboration with local partners, including Nottingham City Council, Skate Nottingham, and the Pythian Club. They seek to address challenges affecting the community; such as mental health provision, understanding youth violence in Nottingham, local experiences of modern slave labour practices, and much more.

We continue to collect ideas for future projects via the project’s online crowdsourcing platform. Anyone can submit their ideas and help develop research projects that will make a real difference to our local area.

This innovative approach is unique to the UfN partnership, as the first collaboration to develop and test this way of supporting local communities to research locally identified challenges. We look forward to sharing progress as the first class of 2023 begin their research.

Mel Barratt, Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council:

“The ability for our communities to engage in high level research can only be a plus in terms of getting greater diversity and representation to study at the highest levels in our two fantastic universities.”

To find out more, visit ufnncollaboratory.ac.uk

Over the next eight years the £5.1m Co(l)laboratory programme will train 50 PhD students and provide 25 paid ‘Citizen Scientist’ research placements all working on solutions to local challenges.
Offering the expertise and analysis of our experts to inform local problem-solving and decision-making: UfN Expert Advisory Panel (EAP)

We wanted to find a way to enable insight and analysis from our academics to help inform local leaders in their decision-making. To do this, we created the UfN Expert Advisory Panel (EAP), which rapidly brings together experts from both universities to analyse evidence and produce concise, cross-disciplinary summaries, informing further evidence gathering requirements, decision-making and action planning.

The EAP’s role is to support local services and leaders across a range of issues, such as social and economic recovery from the pandemic, planning for health and care demand, and developing contingency and resilience plans.

Working in partnership with the Integrated Care Board to identify the session topic, 2022 saw the first pilot of the EAP model. The session focused on summarising and presenting the evidence to the question, what do we need to consider for expected winter pressures in the winter of 2022 in and around Nottingham?

This first session was successful and well received, with discussions underway to explore the themes for focus in 2023.

Investing in community cohesion: Nottingham Students’ Partnership

2022 saw the creation of a ground-breaking new partnership between University of Nottingham Students’ Union and Nottingham Trent Students’ Union to build the relationship between the two organisations and between the respective student bodies, enhancing their involvement in the local civic community.

A cornerstone of this partnership is the appointment of the Nottingham Students’ Partnership Coordinator. The role works closely with external stakeholders to unlock the value of the joint, informed voices of students. This is a unique and innovative approach which has already attracted interest from other cities and supports the aims of the Student Living Strategy to encourage students to be an active part of the city they call home.

The strategy sets out three priorities:
1. Providing diverse and appropriate student accommodation.
2. Working together to tackle any waste and noise issues.
3. Promoting the benefits that the student population brings to Nottingham.

Working together to support the integration of our students into our local communities: Student Living Strategy

Students are crucial to the culture of a city; its economy and social scene; and national and international reputation. That’s why the universities and Nottingham City Council have worked together, to build strong relationships between students and the city, which reflects the diverse needs of different residents. The Student Living Strategy is the culmination of this work.

Additionally, it aims to develop solutions and improvements to some of the practical issues and better integrate students into the wider Nottingham community; building a balanced understanding of the benefits students bring to Nottingham.

The strategy will be published in 2023.
Education partnership, skills and employment

We will target our activities in support of some of our most disadvantaged communities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to help raise educational attainment.

We will collaborate with, and as, major local employers to develop ‘skills for the future’, ensuring that opportunities are visible and accessible to our local communities.

Raising educational attainment

Both universities target outreach activities in support of our most disadvantaged communities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, just one part of a wider programme of activity that looks to raise educational attainment and support progression to university.

In total, Widening Participation teams, across both universities, delivered more than 1,500 events and activities in 2021, working with over 60,000 students ranging from primary through to all stages of secondary school and post-16 education.

Widening Participation teams at both universities have delivered more than 1,500 events and activities in 2021.

Working with over 60,000 students from primary and throughout all ages of secondary education
Ensuring our workforce reflects our communities

We have also begun to explore ways in which our roles as major local employers can be used to deliver positive impacts, increasing levels of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

All the UfN signatory partners have committed to improving EDI in our workplaces. As major employers in the local area, with our partnership collectively employing more than 70,000 local people, we have a key role to play in ensuring that our workforces reflect the communities they serve and belong to.

To tackle this, we have created an EDI Taskforce to take forward collaborative project ideas, ranging from simply sharing good practice and resources, through to more ambitious and innovative proposals to influence recruitment, retention, and progression across our organisations.

We look forward to sharing further progress on this important and exciting agenda in 2023.

Our partnership employs more than 70,000 local people

Our new collaborative EDI Taskforce will work to influence recruitment, retention, and progression across our organisations

Welcoming and supporting those seeking sanctuary: Joint University of Sanctuary award

In July 2022, the universities were jointly awarded University of Sanctuary status in recognition of our efforts to welcome and support refugees and forced migrants, making Nottingham the first city in the country to have two universities receive a joint award.

This award is given to Higher Education institutions that can provide evidence of their commitment to developing initiatives that align with three core principles: learn, embed, and share. Our commitment to this is reflected throughout the student lifecycle as part of research and teaching activity, in addition to well-established partnerships with community organisations across the city and county through a wide range of public engagement and outreach programmes.

Both universities, alongside their Student Action for Refugees (STAR) groups, actively collaborate in their efforts to create the most welcoming and accessible environment possible to people seeking sanctuary, contributing to a city-wide culture of welcome and support.

To find out more, visit universities.cityofsanctuary.org
Environmental sustainability

We will develop innovative ways to tackle the barriers to carbon neutrality and strive for a cleaner, more productive, and inclusive local economy.

We will develop actionable approaches to influence behavioural change that supports ambitions to be carbon neutral; increase recycling rates and protect biodiversity.

Monitoring, encouraging and rewarding sustainable choices across our communities

The UfN partnership continues to champion the use of the Green Rewards App, which encourages sustainable behaviour and change by logging and incentivising carbon reduction actions amongst local citizens. Use and promotion of the Green Rewards App has now been rolled out across both universities and most local authorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Our collective use of the app tracked and incentivised 511,138 collective positive actions, resulting in 1,068,895 tonnes of CO₂ emissions avoided by the universities and the local councils (as of January 2023).

2023 will see efforts focus on partnership working to explore using the insight from the app to target and drive focused campaigns.

Our collective use of the app tracked and incentivised 511,138 positive actions resulting in 1,068,895 tonnes of CO₂ emissions avoided by the universities and the local councils.
Sustainability Action Week: Driving Nottingham’s commitment to be carbon-neutral by 2028

Working in partnership with the City Council, both universities and our Students’ Unions hosted a series of events as part of Sustainability Action Week (28 February–6 March 2022). A wide range of activities were organised, which focused on the role everyone has to play in supporting Nottingham’s commitment to become the country’s first carbon-neutral city by 2028.

Nottingham’s universities in top three worldwide for sustainability

Sustainability is at the heart of both universities’ core goals and vision. In 2022, both NTU and the University of Nottingham were ranked in the top three universities in the world in a ranked list of the world’s most sustainable universities, known as the UI Green Metric.

To find out more visit greenmetric.ui.ac.id

Nottingham Packs for Good!

Each year both universities, the City Council and the British Heart Foundation (BHF) work together to deliver the Nottingham Pack for Good scheme. As students vacate their Nottingham home, the scheme provides the opportunity to donate unwanted items such as clothes, electricals, books and furniture to BHF collection banks on campus and in the local community.

During 2022, students studying at NTU and the University of Nottingham - both those living on campus and in privately rented accommodation in the city - donated a staggering 6,230 bags of unwanted items to the British Heart Foundation (BHF), as part of its Pack for Good Campaign.

Raising £87,220 through the sale of goods at the charity’s network of shops, the donations also diverted almost 50 tonnes from landfill, the equivalent of 294,163 kg of CO₂ emissions.

Nature Positive pledges to enhance local biodiversity

2022 saw both universities forge a new alliance with the aim of improving our ecological footprint. The Nature Positive Universities alliance will help to reverse biodiversity decline, contributing to local biodiversity and net zero carbon aims. Both universities pledged to be Nature Positive in everything that we do, from teaching and research through to operations, supply chains and estate management.

naturepositiveuniversities.net
Health and wellbeing

We will work in partnership to train and retain a high-calibre healthcare workforce and maximise the economic opportunities provided by strong local health, life sciences and MedTech sectors.

Putting Nottinghamshire on the map for cutting-edge healthcare technology.

We have a renowned history for breakthroughs in medical discoveries here in Nottingham and, with more than 91,000 people employed in life sciences, our strengths lie in several areas – including medical devices, biotechnology and healthcare. To maximise our ambitions in relation to the MedTech sector, both universities signed a partnership agreement with the Association of British Healthcare Industries (ABHI), making Nottingham one of only five English cities to have ‘partner city’ status.

Recognition as an ABHI partner city reinforces the message that Nottingham is a centre of excellence in MedTech and greatly bolsters our attractiveness for investors, collaborators, and research funders.

Peter Ellingworth, Chief Executive at the ABHI, said:

“By bringing in ABHI's long-standing expertise in areas like regulation, and our deep connections within the NHS, UK government and the wider HealthTech industry, this partnership allows us to provide focused support for companies, and the broader HealthTech network, in Nottingham. The East Midlands has a compelling offer, and we look forward to collaborating to further strengthen this ecosystem, to benefit patients and stimulate growth of the HealthTech sector.”

“We’re delighted to have entered this new, exciting partnership with ABHI. This builds on our existing industry partnerships to establish a framework that will enable us to work closely together for the mutual benefit of the Nottinghamshire region, industry and, crucially, patients here, across the UK and the world.”

Professor Sir Jonathan Van-Tam MBE, University of Nottingham

More than 91,000 people are employed in life sciences in Nottingham

Watch on NottsTV

Read the news article
Creating extra training provision for nurses

By working together with our local healthcare partners, we are training, and most crucially retaining, a high-calibre healthcare workforce to care for our local population.

Together, the universities have built strong relationships with local hospital trusts, listening to feedback about the clinical skills gaps in the local healthcare workforce. In response we created more than 80 additional graduate and undergraduate nursing training places in key areas of need, all of which were fully recruited into during 2022.

In 2022, more than 80 nursing training places created and fully recruited at undergraduate and graduate level
Economic prosperity

We will deliver an inclusive, sustainable, long-term economic recovery which ensures Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is a prosperous place to live, work, study and invest. We will all be proud, loud advocates for our people and our place.

Supporting the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority.

Through our strong partnership working developed under UfN, we will support on-going delivery and progress.

To find out more visit eastmidlandsdevolution.co.uk
Helping local businesses improve their productivity through innovation

We are collaborating to deliver a range of support to local businesses to enable them to grow, innovate, diversify, or become more efficient and sustainable.

A prime example of this is a project funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and delivered jointly by the University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University, and the University of Derby.

SMEs in the D2N2 area were offered tailored support via postgraduate placements, developing and delivering meaningful and sustainable productivity improvements within businesses with the aim of enhancing their competitiveness. In 2022 the project supported 175 companies across the D2N2 area of Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Introducing local SMEs to the potential of immersive technologies

Initially launched in 2021, Live Experiential and Digital Diversification: Nottingham (LEADD:NG) is a £1.6 million collaborative project between the two universities, partially funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

By combining their immersive technology expertise to work with local businesses, both universities have introduced SMEs to new technologies and helped them develop viable products. With a particular focus on the visitor economy and creative and digital industries, the project offers access to the University of Nottingham’s Mixed Reality Lab and technical support for new product development.

In 2022, the ERDF postgraduate placements project supported 175 businesses to improve their competitiveness, cross the D2N2 area

This innovative project culminated at the end of 2022 with the holographic technology being used to enable Professor Shearer West, University of Nottingham Vice-Chancellor, to appear as a hologram for her keynote speech to the annual UfN Winter Reception.

The collaboration aided several businesses with highlights including:

- Using different technology to deliver hybrid accessible musical and theatrical productions that combine an immersive digital element alongside traditional in-person audiences.
- Presenting multi-user virtual reality on stage as a performance.
- An online festival platform that enables friends and family to meet in virtual environments to share live experiences together and feel like part of a bigger crowd.

LEADD:NG a £1.6 million collaboration to introduce businesses to the potential benefits of immersive technologies
Civic Agreement

This Civic Agreement is underpinned by a recognition that, as ‘anchor institutions’, each of the signatories to this agreement is linked integrally to the people and places of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. We enhance the economic, social, and cultural life, and the health and wellbeing of the City and County. In turn, our staff and students, our patients and our residents become part of the strong communities that define our area.

As partners in this pioneering project, we are passionate advocates for our place, people, and communities. We have a shared mission to improve levels of prosperity, opportunity, sustainability, health and wellbeing for residents and the communities that unite us.

This updated Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement builds on the original commitments made by signatory partners in July 2020, at a time when our local area and communities faced unprecedented challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have learnt from our shared experiences in delivering this agreement. Our partnership working is now more embedded, and this enables us to sharpen our focus and identify collectively where we can most effectively work together to drive local recovery and renewal.

This agreement sets out a programme of priorities and actions which we will champion and drive forward collectively in order to deliver positive change for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. In setting out these priorities, we aim to demonstrate our shared commitment to support the levelling up agenda for our area, strengthening our ability to identify opportunities and giving Government and other bodies confidence in our drive to succeed together.

As part of this, equality, diversity and inclusion remain a top priority for the Universities for Nottingham programme. It underpins our actions and aspirations. We will work hard to ensure that everyone has fair and equitable access to opportunities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The Agreement is not intended to reflect the entirety of activity that each signatory partner delivers individually or jointly in the City and County. Rather, it concentrates on where our collective priorities align and where there is a clear value in acting together to improve the experiences, opportunities, and environment for our own communities and those around us.

We, as the signatories, put forward this Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement as a commitment to the people and place of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Signed by:

Elizabeth Fagan CBE
President and Vice-Chancellor

Kathy McLean OBE
Professorial Chair

Rupert Eggington
Acting Chair of Council

Andrew Cropley
Principal and Chief Executive

Dr Kathy McLean OBE
Chair

Councillor David Mellor
Leader

Councillor Ben Bradley MP
Leader

Dr John Brewin
Chief Executive

Dr John Brewin
Chief Executive

Rupert Eggington
Acting Chief Executive

Andrew Cropley
Principal and Chief Executive

Themes and shared activities

Economic prosperity

1. Provide innovation, enterprise and skills support for employers and communities with a focus on digital and data. As part of this, we will secure external funding and deliver a programme of digital support designed to harness the combined knowledge and expertise of UoN, NTU and partner organisations to benefit individuals and employers across the City and County.

2. Launch the joint marketing campaigns. We will work with our Students’ Unions, local authorities, the BID, local businesses, and other relevant stakeholders in order to maximise the civic, cultural, and economic opportunities associated with graduation, open days, and student welcome. This will be in readiness for future joint place marketing campaigns and ventures.

3. Develop place advocacy and investment. We will continue to play active roles in advocating for and realising major economic development and placemaking ambitions, to deliver benefit and enhance opportunity for our communities. We will collaborate as appropriate to maximise investments and lever in funds in support of the levelling up agenda, including but not exclusively: Project Alchemy, the East Midlands Freeport, Zero, Digital Nottingham, Tomorrow’s NUH, the Broadmarsh redevelopment and the Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre.

4. Support culture, arts, and heritage. We will support and amplify the development of the existing culture, arts and heritage offer within Nottinghamshire. We will champion the exploration of opportunities in these areas relating to the large infrastructure developments across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Education partnership, skills and employment

5. Develop our educational partnership and opportunities. We will work with the Education Partnership Board and key local stakeholders to identify shared ambitions in relation to specific target groups of vulnerable learners, such as those in receipt of the pupil premium. We will pilot and evaluate a shared approach, exploring how our existing provision can support these ambitions and identifying where it can be scalable.

6. Create skills for the future. Working in close partnership with employers and the FE sector, we will create and support a more integrated, flexible, and responsive approach to the provision of skills for the City and County. As part of this, we will look to stimulate the demand for higher-level skills in order to increase the competitiveness of the area and enhance opportunities for local people to secure higher value jobs and embrace a life-long approach to learning.

7. Create improvement in local employment practice. As major local employers, we will share and embed good practice to improve equality, diversity, and inclusivity in the workplace. We will work to improve access to employment opportunities for our local populations and establish a Major Local Employers’ Forum to drive this work forward.

Environmental sustainability

8. Drive a zero-carbon research and innovation agenda. The Universities will work with signatory partners to identify opportunities to translate zero-carbon research into practice and to undertake new research to enhance the competitiveness of the area and contribute towards the achievement of carbon neutrality.

9. Encourage large-scale low-/zero-carbon infrastructure and design. Working together, we will undertake the delivery of low-carbon infrastructure and support the transfer of good practice between partners. Low-carbon infrastructure includes large-scale energy generation, carbon neutral construction and district heat network projects.

10. Support behaviour change among our communities. We will design, deliver, and share sustainability campaigns,Behavioural insight and good practice across our organisations and communities that contribute to our carbon neutral ambitions, using data and insight from the Green Rewards app.

Health and wellbeing

11. Establish a Nottinghamshire MedTech Innovation Cluster. In collaboration with core stakeholders and academics, our ambition is to make Nottingham and Nottinghamshire a centre for clinical excellence.

12. Tackle clinical skills needs across the local healthcare system. The universities and healthcare partners will continue to work together to tackle gaps in the local healthcare workforce, developing post-registration programmes that further develop the skills of the existing workforce.

13. Collaborate on flagship healthcare initiatives such as the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre which enable a step change in regional healthcare outcomes and strengthen Nottingham and Nottinghamshire’s position and reputation as a centre for clinical excellence.

Community connections

14. Tackle local priorities together. Working closely with local stakeholders and signatory partners, we will explore ways for academic expertise and student activities to be well connected to local agendas, challenges, and communities through initiatives such as the UN Expert Advisory Group, student projects in and for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and place-based Doctoral Training Partnerships.

15. Build safe and respectful communities. We will develop a collaborative approach to community safety and cohesion through the delivery of a joint Student Living Strategy and a commitment to progress our shared endeavours to improve women’s safety within our organisations and wider communities.

Health and wellbeing

11. Establish a Nottinghamshire MedTech Innovation Cluster. In collaboration with core stakeholders and academics, our ambition is to make Nottingham and Nottinghamshire a centre for clinical excellence.

12. Tackle clinical skills needs across the local healthcare system. The universities and healthcare partners will continue to work together to tackle gaps in the local healthcare workforce, developing post-registration programmes that further develop the skills of the existing workforce.

13. Collaborate on flagship healthcare initiatives such as the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre which enable a step change in regional healthcare outcomes and strengthen Nottingham and Nottinghamshire’s position and reputation as a centre for clinical excellence.

Community connections

14. Tackle local priorities together. Working closely with local stakeholders and signatory partners, we will explore ways for academic expertise and student activities to be well connected to local agendas, challenges, and communities through initiatives such as the UN Expert Advisory Group, student projects in and for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and place-based Doctoral Training Partnerships.

15. Build safe and respectful communities. We will develop a collaborative approach to community safety and cohesion through the delivery of a joint Student Living Strategy and a commitment to progress our shared endeavours to improve women’s safety within our organisations and wider communities.
See our latest news and join our mailing list for regular updates at universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk

#UnisForNottingham