

# Nottingham Student Living Strategy

2023-2028



Committed to partnership



Nottingham  
City Council



Nottingham Trent  
University



University of  
Nottingham  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

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TO BE ADDED

# Foreword

In July 2020, Nottingham City Council (NCC), Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and the University of Nottingham (UoN), along with five other pivotal organisations, launched the Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement.

This Agreement is underpinned by a recognition that the two universities are integrally linked to the place and people of Nottingham and that a productive and supportive relationship is mutually beneficial. The universities enhance the life of the city culturally, economically and socially, and the city enhances the lives of their staff and students through its built and natural environment, culture and hospitality.

Furthermore, NCC, NTU and UoN are committed to a shared mission to improve levels of prosperity, opportunity, sustainability, health and wellbeing for all residents and communities.

We collectively understand that whilst there are many benefits in having two world-class universities in the city, this can also create some issues. We are committed to working together to address these. In this Student Living Strategy (SLS), we set out the ambitious actions that we are, and will be, taking to make Nottingham the best city it can be for its residents.

We will regularly revisit these actions to assess progress and refresh plans where appropriate. We will listen and act on the feedback we receive, as we continue to offer a world-class student experience in Nottingham and seek to enhance the lives of our communities.

Working together we intend to support the vision set out in Nottingham City Council's strategic plan (2021):

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“We want Nottingham to be a city where people feel safe to live and work, that is an exciting and welcoming place to play, study and visit, a city that is clean and environmentally sustainable, where we are ambitious for Nottingham people and businesses, and where local people are proud of their city, their neighbourhood and their local community.”

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**Professor Edward Peck**  
Vice-Chancellor  
Nottingham Trent  
University

**Councillor David Mellen**  
Leader  
Nottingham City Council

**Professor Shearer West**  
Vice-Chancellor  
University of Nottingham

# Introduction and background

Nottingham City Council (NCC), the University of Nottingham (UoN) and Nottingham Trent University (NTU) have worked together to create this Student Living Strategy (SLS). It will develop a medium to long term plan that ensures the organisations can support the needs of Nottingham's large and distinct student population, whilst maximising the many benefits and minimising any negative impacts on the city's local communities, businesses and services.

NTU and the UoN are both highly regarded and popular institutions that make up a vital part of the city's economy and its national and international reputation. They add a combined £3.8bn to the UK economy every year, form the equivalent of around 14% of the local economy, and support 25,000 jobs across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The universities and their students attract substantial investment, provide considerable local employment and support growth across a range of sectors. Between their role as major local employers and procurers, their innovative research and the spending power their students bring to Nottingham, the universities play a key role in helping the city meet the Council's strategic objectives. The Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement provides a helpful overview of the shared agendas and collaboration more broadly.

Nottingham is a young, diverse city. Around one in seven Nottingham City residents is a student at one of the two institutions, and more than half of the population is under 30 (the average across the UK's core cities is 44.7%). This gives the city opportunities to maximise the potential of this dynamic, innovative generation by harnessing their enthusiasm to volunteer in the community, undertake work placements and projects during their studies, and encourage graduates to stay in Nottingham and use their skills in local businesses – about 30% of graduates stay in the East Midlands region after graduating, which is fairly typical within the sector. Nottingham has a lively cultural and entertainment scene, which is supported and in part generated by students, for example: Metronome, Confetti, New Theatre, Bonington Gallery and Lakeside Arts.

Whilst there are many demonstrable benefits of having two world-class universities in Nottingham, the resulting geographical concentrations of young people, who are often living away from the family home for the first time, can create issues in building cohesive communities. In these areas, a large number of students living in residential houses has led to some impacts on these communities and some council services. The partners have put in place actions to address these, and this Strategy sets out further longer-term approaches.

As part of the Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement, the partner organisations – NCC, NTU and UoN – have committed to work together to develop a clear strategy aimed at maximising the benefits and minimising the challenges associated with a large student population. The partners are committed to creating safe, sustainable, inclusive, and mixed communities in Nottingham, where individuals enjoy mutual respect.

The Student Living Strategy outlines the collective priorities of the partnership, the actions that will deliver these priorities and how success will be measured.

# Ambition

To create a Strategy that is relevant, accurate and impactful, the partners commissioned an independent market research company to undertake a series of focus groups with a range of key stakeholders. These included residents' groups, students, accommodation providers, business membership organisations, service providers and councillors. This engagement enabled the partners to agree the overall ambition and priorities of the Strategy.

The three organisations have committed to:

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Work together to make Nottingham a great city to live, learn and grow in, where diverse, sustainable communities support the health, wellbeing and potential of all residents, and individuals are treated with equity, giving and receiving mutual respect for the benefit of all.

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Collaboration will be essential in achieving this ambition. By working together, Nottingham can continue to be an attractive destination for students who become active and engaged citizens, contributing significantly to the economy, sustainability, diversity, culture and vibrancy of the city and communities in which they reside.

# Priorities

The Strategy will focus on the following priorities:

<b>Priority 1:</b>	<b>Diversify and innovate to improve the quality, safety, affordability and location of available accommodation for all students across the city. Actively promote a growth in affordable alternative accommodation options to encourage a better balance of student housing choice across the city.</b>
<b>Priority 2:</b>	<b>Encourage neighbourliness, where students contribute to creating a clean, attractive and sustainable environment which supports the wellbeing of the entire community. Proactively tackle the social and financial impact of waste and noise issues.</b>
<b>Priority 3:</b>	<b>Ensure students are valued members of the communities they reside in and proactively work to maximise graduate retention by developing and promoting opportunities to increase community cohesion and mutual benefit for all citizens.</b>

The document will now consider each of the priorities, setting out the context, the work already undertaken by the partners, the objectives, the agreed actions and the ways success will be measured. The success measures will be regularly reviewed and governance arrangements will ensure that the Strategy is meeting the priorities over the longer term.

# Priority one

Diversify and innovate to improve the quality, safety, affordability and location of available accommodation for all students across the city. Actively promote a growth in affordable alternative accommodation options to encourage a better balance of student housing choice across the city.

## What makes this a priority?

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Good quality, safe and affordable housing is of paramount importance to all residents in our city. For most students, securing high quality, affordable accommodation in a suitable location is an integral part of a positive university experience and essential to their wellbeing. Good quality accommodation makes it easier to be a good neighbour.

Most first-year students live in university-owned or 'sourced' halls of residence, and some live in privately rented purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA). After their first year at university, many move into smaller rented flats with friends or larger Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). However, students are a diverse community with individual housing needs and preferences, and, in the right circumstances, some now choose PBSA over HMOs. According to a 2022 survey, PBSA providers report that 40% of bed spaces are occupied by 'returning' students (that is those not in their first year of undergraduate study) although this does vary considerably between providers. The partners are optimistic that this percentage will increase over time as more PBSA bed spaces become available, which are particularly designed for these groups.

The growth in student demand for HMOs, especially in certain areas close to their universities, has added to a reduction in the availability of larger, affordable family houses, contributing to Nottingham now having fewer 'family' properties than other UK cities. Families moving out of the city results in less sustainable, inclusive, and mixed communities, and impacts the range of services and facilities available.

By contrast, it is widely accepted that PBSAs are more environmentally friendly, can reduce anti-social behaviour, have all-inclusive bills, act as a catalyst for other developments and create jobs. They are a popular choice with students and have consistently low vacancy rates (less than 2% of bed spaces in recent years even as their numbers have increased significantly).

What remains at the heart of this strategy is choice. Students, like all renters, have different needs. By ensuring there is a sufficient range of affordable options, students have the best opportunity of finding accommodation that suits their needs.

# What is the current picture?

## Growth in student numbers

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While growth in individual institutions is dependent on consumer choice and other variables, with a demographic boom and two world-class universities, Nottingham will likely continue to be a popular choice for students for the foreseeable future.

In 2020/21, over 9,000 students from Nottinghamshire studied at the two universities. A further 10,000 were from the wider East Midlands region, accounting for a quarter of all students at the universities, which are important educational establishments for local people.

The number of students requiring accommodation in Nottingham has grown by more than a quarter since 2016/17, from approximately 40,000 to 52,750. Between 2021 and 2030, the number of 18-year-olds in England will increase by 24%; across Nottinghamshire this figure is 28%.

## Housing supply

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In 2020/21, Nottingham was cited as having the fourth largest HMO market in the UK, and many HMOs will be occupied by students. Planning policy restrictions in areas where there is already a high density of student households limit the conversion of dwellings suitable for family occupation to HMOs.

Alongside these moves to retain family homes in key areas, NCC's Strategic Plan (2023-2027) commits to '*continue to encourage purpose-built student accommodation in places where it reduces pressure on family housing*' and work has been underway to significantly grow the availability of PBSA bed spaces although growth over the past five years has not kept pace with the increase in student numbers, and a substantial shortfall has been created. There are, however, approximately 10,000 new PBSA bed spaces currently in the pipeline – Nottingham's scale of growth is second only to London.

Local plan policies encourage a widening of the PBSA market. Developers are required to provide evidence of need and proposals should set out what segment of student population the development will cater for. A large proportion of student rental schemes consist largely of studio flats, with Nottingham having a much higher proportion of studio bedspaces at 21% compared to the national average of 12%. Schemes designed to appeal to returning students, students requiring short-term contracts and students with families are particularly welcomed. Returning students have a preference to live as a household with friends, therefore schemes addressing these preferences are more likely to be supported.

However, PBSAs are often less affordable and can be less attractive to returning students – with average prices for PBSA currently around 20-25% higher than in shared HMOs in Nottingham. Although with the Government's Rental Reform proposals, HMO rents are expected to increase. It is recognised that shared accommodation within private rented housing close to the universities will remain the preferred choice for some students. Consequently, whilst appropriate PBSA developments in suitable locations are a fundamental part of this strategy, the provision of high-



quality HMOs and other types of accommodation will continue to be a prominent and important housing choice for students.

Affordability is a central tenet to this strategy. Although the partners have no control over the rents set by private PBSA providers, the intention is that by increasing supply, there will be more competition, which should lead to increased quality and affordability.

A shortage of student accommodation is a common problem faced by many other cities in the UK with high student populations. Some cities report high shortages of appropriate housing, resulting in some students being accommodated outside of these cities. Shortages in supply can cause a lack of healthy competition, impacting the student rental market and increasing demand across the market. This is a situation that Nottingham has largely avoided because of close working between partners and a good understanding of market demand and supply.

A HEPI blog on student housing supply recommends our development of a Student Living Strategy as 'a good example of an informed and joined-up approach' that could be modelled in other cities with large student populations.

## Housing quality

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NCC uses licensing schemes to ensure people in rented accommodation have safe, good-quality places to live. This includes issuing more than 24,000 property licences, whilst ensuring that licence holders and managers are competent. Where standards fall short, the Council investigates and takes enforcement action.

By law, it is mandatory that larger HMOs are licensed. NCC also requires smaller HMOs in some areas to be licensed through its Additional Licensing scheme. In 2018, NCC introduced Selective Licensing in more areas within the city to further regulate the Private Rented Sector (PRS).

Students have rights as tenants and can check the property they want to rent has the correct licence in place and they can report those properties that do not to NCC; they may not be aware that they can also report issues with their landlord for investigation. Students can access property reviews, however, the current platform is not well utilised or advertised amongst student communities.

The Council Plan 2021-23 commits to *"improving standards of rented accommodation for students, working with landlords to ensure students know how to raise concerns about their property"*. Two organisations deliver property accreditation in the city's PRS: Decent and Safe Homes (DASH) and Unipol.

Around a third of HMOs are accredited through the Unipol Code or DASH, leaving scope for accreditation to be a more influential lever to improve quality. Most PBSAs are accredited through the National Code or the Universities UK Code.

## What more will we do together?

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**Our shared goal:** Ensure that new student accommodation schemes, particularly PBSAs, meet the diverse needs of future students

## How will we achieve it?

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- The universities will undertake market research with current and prospective students, and review nationally available information, to better understand the needs of diverse groups of students.
- NCC will develop student accommodation planning policy guidance for developers informed by the specific needs of the student population. This will include guidance on accommodation, design, scale, layout, format and sustainability measures.
- The universities will routinely comment on applications for new third-party student accommodation schemes.
- The universities will consider the feasibility of extending their nominating schemes for PBSA bed spaces to include returning students in addition to first years.
- All partners will continue to support and promote PBSA and in addition will look for alternative models of student accommodation, for example student housing co-operatives to widen quality, choice and affordability.
- All partners to continue to share accurate data on student numbers and accommodation needs, including monitoring the number of council tax exempt properties.

**Our shared goal:** Universities will directly invest to increase housing choices available to students

## How will we achieve it?

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- Deliver a programme of sustainable refurbishment and modernisation of on-campus student residences to increase the desirability of on-campus living.
- UoN will review increasing the provision of accommodation on campus by around 2,000 additional bed spaces over the next decade. All work will support university strategies of equality, diversity and inclusion and supporting science-based targets.
- Continue to work with private providers to deliver PBSA housing schemes targeted at the diverse returning-student market.

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## **Our shared goal:** Improve the quality of HMOs

### **How will we achieve it?**

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- Partners will agree a single platform for accreditations, reviews and ratings and actively seek to promote this to students and landlords.
- NCC will ensure all existing powers of enforcement are used to maximise the safety, management and standards of 'on-street' student accommodation.
- Partners will assess and implement measures to engage with owners and tenants of the most problematic HMOs.
- Partners will engage more closely with letting agents and landlords, including attending relevant forums or meetings.
- The universities will prioritise improving the advice and guidance available for returning and international students.
- Universities, student unions and NCC will work together to make it easier and more accessible for students to report issues and concerns.
- Investigate ways to measure students' satisfaction across all accommodation options.

### **How will we know if we're making progress?**

- Increase in the proportion of students living in PBSAs, and in particular 'returning' students.
- Diverse mix of types of PBSA developments will lower the proportion of studios across the market in Nottingham.
- Low vacancy rate of PBSA bed spaces across the city will be maintained.
- High engagement from students and landlords on the agreed method of accreditation.
- A comparatively slower rental level increase compared to the sector (PBSAs) and benchmarked comparator institutions (HMOs) .

# Priority two

Encourage neighbourliness, where students contribute to creating a clean, attractive and sustainable environment which supports the wellbeing of the entire community. Proactively tackle the social and financial impact of waste and noise issues.

## What makes this a priority?

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Student and/or HMO households account for approximately one in ten households across the city. There are five wards within Nottingham with higher-than-average concentrations of students. More than 80% of the total student and/or HMO households are in these five wards.

Most students are considerate neighbours who live cohesively within shared communities. However, as with all communities, a small proportion have a negative impact on those around them. Some students and landlords contribute to waste, fly-tipping and litter issues. In some cases, ongoing disruptive and anti-social behaviour (ASB) causes distress to some residents and leads to frustrations across communities. Students can also experience crime and ASB, and communications and campaigns run throughout the year to highlight advice and support services.

The safety and wellbeing of all is paramount; therefore, any type of ASB perpetrated by any member of a community is not acceptable. For the benefit of all members of these shared communities, the partners are committed to finding meaningful ways to assess, monitor and tackle issues, with a sharper future focus on prevention and enforcement, as well as responsive actions.

## What is the current picture?

The universities have codes of behaviour that outline the expectations of students and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. Breaches of these codes are investigated swiftly and thoroughly, and subsequent sanctions are applied. The Council also undertakes enforcement action, in addition to education and preventative actions.

The partners attend regular meetings and local events with community representatives to discuss issues, find solutions, and continually look for ways to enhance this two-way communication with communities.

There is currently only limited data available to help accurately assess the extent to which issues relate to student households, particularly in relation to waste, and partners will explore how better data can be obtained and shared to accurately show the impacts.

## Noise and anti-social behaviour

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Between September 2021 and August 2022 there were 14,589 incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to the police, via 101 calls across Nottingham City (a 23% decrease on the previous year). Student-related ASB accounted for 671 incidents (just under 5%) largely related to noise disturbances and parties. Other forms of ASB (for example, graffiti, verbal abuse and intimidation) are normally unrelated to students.

There is a steadfast commitment to tackling the perpetrators of ASB. In line with this data, however, it is important that the ASB incidence rate is not disproportionately attributed to the student population, although some communities will be more affected than others. All occurrences of ASB have negative impacts on communities, and this strategy seeks to identify and further positive solutions to address and prevent instances of student-related ASB.

NCC and the universities are proactive in tackling disruptive student behaviour. Close partnership working is already making a difference in the prevention of, and response to, incidents and the universities invest significant resources in tackling disruption.

For example, the universities have in recent years funded up to 2,000 hours of additional Community Protection Officer patrols to tackle noise and antisocial behaviour in areas with the highest concentration of students. Student-facing campaigns encourage respect and participation in communities, including: a *'Welcome to the Community'* initiative; crime prevention and personal safety activities; waste and recycling action days; leaflet drops; door knocking; presentations to sports societies; and encouragement to become Community Engagement Ambassadors.

The community liaison teams respond to and investigate all reported student-related antisocial behaviour incidents. NTU Security Officers carry out high visibility reassurance patrols in neighbourhoods and attend off-campus student-related antisocial behaviour outside of normal office hours to gather evidence and speak to residents. A city-wide NCC Community Protection vehicle responds to calls about noise and has a dedicated phone number for noise complaints across the city (not just areas of the city with high student concentrations) enabling residents to access help directly. UoN community engagement teams patrol local areas to promote positive behaviour and education on waste and noise matters.

Several Community Protection Officers have been on restorative practice training. This is designed to, when appropriate, move away from the current enforcement model and look at more meaningful and impactful ways of behaviour management. The idea is to bring the victim and perpetrator of antisocial behaviour together to discuss the impact on the individual and wider community.

## Waste

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Clean neighbourhoods are a priority for the city. In areas with high levels of rented properties (such as those with large numbers of houses occupied by students) there are some issues related to fly tipping, bins left on streets, contaminated recycling bins and additional waste that does not fit inside bins. There are likely to be several contributory factors, including, but not limited to: landlords ensuring that suitable waste facilities are available at properties (such as the correct type and

number of bins); larger properties housing higher numbers of individuals that produce more waste and recycling than smaller properties; sufficient suitable locations in which to store bins; and access to transport to dispose of bulky waste items. Along with this, there is a continual need for education on waste management and being a responsible citizen in the community. There are also seasonal peaks associated with key times in the year.

Whilst acknowledging the issues, partners are working together to make improvements. Regular 'ward walks' with representatives of all partners are undertaken to identify any localised problems which can be tackled swiftly, using a balance of education and enforcement. University community liaison colleagues attend welcome events at the start of the year to provide guidance on waste management. Staff are also visible in the community at key points, for example, in the lead-up to the winter holiday period and at the end of the academic year, to reduce negative impacts of waste. Partners co-ordinate their responses at the end of each term and agree how to reduce any negative environmental impact at these key points in the year.

Through the British Heart Foundation's (BHF) Pack for Good Campaign 2021, the combined efforts of students at both universities and NCC resulted in 96.7 tonnes of waste being diverted from landfill - the equivalent of 985,000kg of CO2 emissions - and raised £169,000 for the BHF.

NTU employs a dedicated waste co-ordinator, funds litter pickers in the spring/summer for the streets surrounding the NTU city campus and the Arboretum, and deploys its own road sweeper. In warmer weather, NTU provides bin liners to students at the Arboretum after 5pm, encouraging them to dispose of their rubbish responsibly. UoN employs 12 paid student Community Engagement Ambassadors to support all residents in areas where students choose to live. The initiative aims to build positive and long-standing relationships, promote respectful behaviour, improve sustainability awareness, work consistently with Community Protection Officers (CPOs) and Police and improve neighbourhood safety through various initiatives and campaigns. Additional waste services at key times, such as the end of tenancies, are provided by on-campus waste teams, providing a solution to prevent excess street waste and reduce fly-tipping.

## University £1m joint investment

A joint £1m investment by the universities in 2023/24 will pay for costs associated with reducing and responding to anti-social behaviour. The money is used to pay for additional community protection officers; increased security; student Community Engagement Ambassadors; a partnership with Nottinghamshire Police; additional waste collections; a community van, sweeper and litter pickers; and campaign materials, newsletters and events.

## Green and open spaces

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Nottingham has a network of high quality open and green spaces, with NCC and the universities making major contributions to this provision. In 2022, Nottingham had a total of 71 Green Flag Awards, the highest of any council outside London. These open spaces are enormously valuable to all Nottingham's residents, providing space for leisure activities, exercise and relaxation, and contributing positively to individuals' physical and mental health.

At certain peak times of the year, for example, warm summer days and evenings, these spaces are often very busy which has resulted in extra cleansing and infrastructure repairs needing to be carried out. Partners work hard to ensure they remain clean and attractive for use by all. Partners will ensure students, along with all Nottingham's residents, continue to have access to safe, good quality public open spaces. In most instances, when new PBSA schemes are permitted, funds are paid by the developer to improve open space within the city. This money will be used to enhance and improve existing as well as provide new open space, where possible.

Students and staff, along with residents across Nottinghamshire, are encouraged to use the Green Rewards app, an online platform that rewards users for behaviours that promote sustainability – from travel and waste to nature and wellbeing activities.

## Student safety

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Student safety is of utmost importance to all partners. Nottingham has held Purple Flag status since 2010 – an international accreditation demonstrating excellence in the night-time economy and partnership working to create safe and thriving locations.

The universities, City Council and Nottinghamshire Police work in close partnership to enhance student safety through:

- Providing dedicated PCSO/Police presence around campuses and areas with large student populations
- Reviewing night-time safety factors such as street lighting and public transport routes
- Providing opportunities for reporting issues so that causes can be identified and tackled more rapidly
- Sharing data to identify the causes of crime and reduce occurrences through safety and awareness initiatives
- Working with local businesses to enhance safety in night-time venues
- Encouraging community cohesion through student volunteering and engagement with residents, Neighbourhood Watch schemes and landlords

Both universities have the 'Report + Support' platform – see NTU and UoN – which provides a quick and easy way to report issues and get support. Online resources are available for UoN and NTU students, who can also access a 24-hour security phone line, get advice on enjoying a safe night out, and use the 'safe taxis' scheme. NTU has dedicated 'safe spaces' at three campuses that students can access during the night.

## What more will we do together?

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**Our shared goal:** Invest in additional prevention and enforcement provision

## How will we achieve it?

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- In 2023/24, the universities will invest approximately £1m into the prevention and enforcement of issues related to waste, noise and other ASB. This is around a three-fold increase in spend since 2019/20.
  - The universities will expand the use of restorative justice for issues related to noise complaints, where this is deemed appropriate.
  - Any additional funding provided by the universities to be reviewed and agreed to allow for flexibility and evolution in line with shared principles.
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**Our shared goal:** Maximise the use of council licensing schemes to tackle issues associated with waste and noise

## How will we achieve it?

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- NCC will continue to support the requirements as part of the HMO licence conditions, that Licence holder must manage waste in accordance with the local waste strategy.
  - NCC will make it easier for tenants and other residents to report licensing issues.
  - NCC will track and publicise enforcement interventions undertaken by the licensing service as a deterrent for poor landlords.
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**Our shared goal:** Improve partnership working, targeting resource where it is most needed

## How will we achieve it?

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- Partners will continue to create bespoke operational partnership plans for key times in the year.
- The universities will continue to share clear messages about how to report issues, including contact phone numbers and operating times.
- Partners will develop a solution that allows incidents to be recorded accurately and shared appropriately amongst partners.
- Partners will continue work together to maintain and enhance existing public open spaces, particularly during peak times of use.



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**Our shared goal:** Develop and expand the approach to 'reduce, reuse and recycle'

## How will we achieve it?

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- The universities will work with their Student Unions to create new and innovative joint 'reduce, reuse, recycle' campaigns that run at key points in the year.
- The partners will enhance existing work with charities, third-party sector and PBSA providers to extend re-use programmes and develop better swapping mechanisms.
- Partners will collaborate to increase understanding of appropriate bin use, to avoid contamination.
- NCC will explore aligning bin rounds to simplify collection days in areas with high student populations.
- NCC will explore utilising better data to help tackle waste issues e.g. bin contamination, bins left on streets, and side waste.

## How will we know if we're making progress?

- Top 5% of cities in the country for 'Pack for Good' scheme – total amount/weight of donated items.
- Year-on-year decrease in number and proportion of 'student-tagged' anti-social behaviour reports – through 101 reports.
- Increase in percentage of students being given restorative justice sanctions as opposed to fines.
- Increase in % of inspections meeting 'Grade A standard' – Street Cleansing City Centre & Neighbourhoods.

# Priority three

Ensure students are valued members of the communities they reside in and proactively work to maximise graduate retention by developing and promoting opportunities to increase community cohesion and mutual benefit for all citizens.

## What makes this a priority?

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Students and graduates bring vast economic, social and cultural benefits to the cities they choose to make their home. While the spending power these additional residents bring is an important short-term benefit, the ideas, innovation, energy and enthusiasm they bring can deliver much more impactful and longer-term benefits for the city.

At the heart of maximising these benefits for Nottingham is proactive work to ensure students feel they belong in the city, not just their university. We want to ensure they are involved and invested in the communities where they live and develop strong bonds which evolve into job opportunities, friendships and community links which make staying beyond their studies an attractive choice.

Engaging in activities that extend beyond their academic studies and immediate student community offers students the opportunity to build long-lasting connections to the area. This plays a crucial role in students deciding to stay in the city after graduating, which means talent is invested back into the local area, strengthening its workforce and contributing to Nottingham remaining a vibrant and attractive place to live and work.

## What is the current picture?

Nottingham's 62,000-strong student population interact with the broader community in many ways: from thousands of volunteering hours connecting students with local people; to work placements undertaken in local businesses where their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm can have transformative impacts; to community-engaged learning projects, helping to deliver important outcomes for local organisations, to supporting thousands of local children and young people to realise their potential. Prior to and on arrival at university, students are encouraged to actively consider the role they play as citizens of the city and the positive contribution that they can have.

## Voluntary, workplace and community-engaged learning opportunities

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Each year, thousands of students undertake work placements and projects in Nottingham City businesses. Both universities run internship and placement schemes for students and graduates, many in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), charities or social organisations.

For example, all NTU courses, across every subject area, offer a work experience opportunity. At UoN, schemes like the Nottingham Internship Scheme, the Nottingham Consultancy Challenge and the Social Impact Game have offered opportunities for students to work with local SMEs, charities and alumni to gain experience, solve business challenges or create new projects. Programmes like the Skills Access Hub encourage businesses to engage with the University to upskill their existing workforce and recruit, retain and develop graduates. In 2022, over 100 NTU students took part in the Grads4Nottm initiative, working with local employers to solve business challenges.

Nottingham Community Volunteering Scheme (CVS) reported that, in 2020/21, almost a quarter of all new volunteer registrations were students at one of Nottingham's two universities. Each year, student and staff volunteers provide thousands of hours of support to local charities and community projects. At NTU, courses are increasingly embedding community engaged learning into the curriculum. This approach enables students to engage with communities and voluntary organisations to identify and address real-world needs as part of their course.

Since 2015, NTU Law School's free advice service, NLS Legal has recovered over £5.5m for local people. The UoN Co-Responders – a service run by volunteer healthcare students and graduates trained by the East Midlands Ambulance Service to respond to 999 calls – has increased NHS capacity by attending more than 8,000 emergencies since its inception in 2014.

## Voting

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Engaging in local democracy and making your voice heard is a crucial part of 'belonging'. Each academic year, the universities provide NCC with details of eligible students, and the Council proactively encourages them to register to vote. Targeted communications and social media from the council and the universities promote the importance of participating in the democratic process, particularly around elections. Polling stations located on or close to university campuses increase access, but we know uptake is not as high among student communities as longer-term communities, and voter registration mechanisms could be developed further.

## Shared communities

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Whilst we acknowledge that there are challenges associated with mixed student and long-term resident communities, there are indications that Nottingham largely does enjoy good relationships. For example, in the most recent Citizens' Survey (2019), 93% of residents *“feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together”*.

In addition, initiatives like UoN's Community Chest Fund help students develop projects that support their local communities, helping combat waste management, noise and crime issues and strengthening relationships between residents. In 2019/20 there were 251,600 visits from local families, schoolchildren and members of the community to arts and culture facilities and programmes run by the universities. In the same year, almost 35,000 local children took part in university access programmes.

## Graduate retention

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The national picture shows that graduate retention rates vary significantly between cities, but Nottingham's rate is not unusual – around 30% of graduates choose to stay in the city or the wider East Midlands area after they finish their degree.

Cities that retain the most graduates do so because of their strong economies and the opportunities they can offer. Graduates with a qualification in arts, humanities and education are far more likely than STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) graduates to stay in the same region of study for work. Most notably, at 33.8%, the East Midlands has the lowest retention rate among STEM graduates in the UK.

This correlates with the fact that the East Midlands has the lowest research and development (R&D) spend of any region in the country, which impacts the availability of graduate jobs in STEM fields. Whilst national R&D spend is beyond the scope of this strategy, there is more that can be done through this partnership to link students with local employers and communities during their study to encourage more talent to stay in Nottingham after graduation.

## What more will we do together?

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**Our shared goal:** Encourage students to be active citizens and contribute positively to the communities in which they live

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## How will we achieve it?

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- The universities will review the range of communications promoting active citizenship among students, to develop and deliver a refreshed annual joint campaign early in the academic year.
- Partners will work together to implement technological solutions to increase the proportion of students enrolled onto the electoral register.

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**Our shared goal:** Encourage students to volunteer and undertake work placements with local businesses

## How will we achieve it?

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- The universities will develop a shared understanding of their key areas of focus for student and staff volunteering to enable an increase in collaboration and uptake.
- The universities will actively promote the credit-bearing and funded opportunities for placements and community-engaged learning, with a particular focus on opportunities within the city.
- The universities will improve data collection for volunteering and placements to better demonstrate their impact and inform future activity.
- Partners will promote the positive impact of volunteering and placements on both the individual and the community through their communications channels.

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**Our shared goal:** Promote a wider range of community events to students and encourage wider community involvement in relevant university events

## How will we achieve it?

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- The partners will promote local community events to better connect students and the wider community.

## How will we know if we're making progress?

- Increased year-on-year percentage of students undertaking placements/internships in organisations in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.
- Increased year-on-year percentage of full-time students registered to vote (using as a benchmark those registered in halls and PBSAs).
- Increased year-on-year percentage of graduates who remain in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire after their studies.

# Review and governance of the Strategy

The Strategy is designed to address the ongoing challenges set out within this document over the long term, but it will also be important that appropriate review of the actions within the Strategy will be undertaken along with suitable governance arrangements. The review process will actively consider the success measures that have been set out to see how well the Strategy is performing and how it can be adapted.

# Appendix A: References

The eight organisations which are signatories of the Commitment are: Nottingham City Council, Nottingham Trent University, University of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Vision West Nottinghamshire College, D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement.  
<https://www.universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk/commitment>

Nottingham City Council Strategic Council Plan 2023-27.  
<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/media/3377077/enc-1-for-strategic-council-plan-2023-2027.pdf>

Universities for Nottingham Economic, Social and Cultural impact report, p.6.  
[https://www.universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk/assets/downloads/UfN\\_Report-min\\_1.pdf](https://www.universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk/assets/downloads/UfN_Report-min_1.pdf)

Nottingham City Council Strategic Council Plan 2021-23  
<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/media/3372996/full-strategic-council-plan-2021-23.pdf>

Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement  
<https://www.universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk/commitment>

Nottingham Insight  
<https://www.nottinghaminsight.org.uk/population/>

For an explanation of what is meant by ‘significant concentration’ please see pp. 324-326, Nottingham City Council, Local Plan Part 2, January 2020  
<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/localplan>

The 2011 Census found that only 56% of dwellings in Nottingham had 3 or more bedrooms compared with 63% in Greater Nottingham and 60% nationally, p. 82  
<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/media/3332773/land-and-planning-policies-document-lapp-2020.pdf>

Where do HE students come from? (HESA) – the wider East Midlands region includes: Derby (City), Derbyshire, Leicester (City), Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Rutland.  
<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from>

Subnational population projections for England: 2018-based (ONS)  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland/2018based>  
Cushman and Wakefield UK Student Accommodation Report 2020/21 p. 21  
<https://www.cushmanwakefield.com/en/united-kingdom/insights/uk-student-accommodation-report>

‘Significant concentration’ is considered to be 10% as defined in the Part 2 Local Plan and consists of both known student households (based on council tax exemptions) and known houses in multiple occupation.

Nottingham City Council Strategic Council Plan 2021-23 p.31  
<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/media/3372996/full-strategic-council-plan-2021-23.pdf>



Cushman and Wakefield UK Student Accommodation Report 2022 p. 40  
<https://www.cushmanwakefield.com/en/united-kingdom/insights/uk-student-accommodation-report>

National Residential Landlords Association article  
<https://www.nrla.org.uk/news/student-hmos-under-threat-by-rental-reform-plans#:~:text=Plans%20to%20ban%20fixed%2Dterm,end%20of%20the%20academic%20year>

Why there should be no surprises about the growing student housing shortage (HEPI 2022)  
<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2022/11/11/why-there-should-be-no-surprises-about-the-growing-student-housing-shortage/>

Large HMOs are defined as houses where five or more people from two or more households share toilets, bathrooms or cooking facilities.

HMOs are defined as houses where three or four people from two or more households share toilets, bathrooms or cooking facilities.

Nottingham City Council Strategic Council Plan 2021-23 p31  
[https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/media/3371718/strategic\\_councill\\_plan\\_2021.pdf](https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/media/3371718/strategic_councill_plan_2021.pdf)

Actions: Short-term is defined as less than one year, medium-term is defined as one to two years, and long-term is defined as more than two years

Lenton and Wollaton East, Radford, Hyson Green and Arboretum, Castle and St Ann's

Student codes of behaviour (NTU and UoN)  
<https://www.ntu.ac.uk/studenthub/my-course/student-handbook/student-code-of-behaviour>  
<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicsservices/currentstudents/code-of-discipline-for-students.aspx>

My Nottingham News (2022)  
<https://www.mynottinghamnews.co.uk/nottingham-recognised-as-having-some-of-the-best-parks-in-the-uk-in-a-record-breaking-year-nottingham-is-again-raising-its-prestigious-green-flag-awards/>

Universities for Nottingham Economic, Social and Cultural impact report, p.19  
<https://www.universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk/impact>

Accommodation Costs Survey 2021 produced by NUS and Unipol, p.10  
<https://www.unipol.org.uk/accommodation-costs-survey-2021>

Citizens' Survey (Nottingham Insight)  
<https://www.nottinghaminsight.org.uk/research-areas/citizens-survey/>

Students flock to cities – but how can they retain graduates? (City Monitor)  
<https://citymonitor.ai/government/students-flock-cities-how-can-they-retain-graduates-3508>

Regional Brain Drain and Gain in the UK: Regional Patterns of Graduate Retention and Attraction (University of Birmingham)  
<https://blog.bham.ac.uk/cityredi/regional-brain-drain-and-gain-in-the-uk-regional-patterns-of-graduate-retention-and-attraction/>

# Appendix B: Glossary

## Cluster flats

Student accommodation within PBSA that consist of two or more bedrooms with residents sharing a kitchen, living room and other facilities.

## Houses in multiple occupation (HMO)

Residential units with three or more occupiers sharing basic amenities.

## Licensing

The three types of property licence are as follows:

- A mandatory house in multiple occupation (HMO) licence applies to properties with five or more people from two or more households who share toilets, bathrooms or cooking facilities.

The other two forms are discretionary, with local authorities having powers to introduce them in designated areas provided that they meet the criteria set out in legislation:

- Additional HMO licence – applies to HMOs in areas of the city within the designated area of an additional licensing scheme which has been implemented by the local authority. It applies to privately rented flats or houses where three or four unrelated people from two or more households reside and share some basic facilities.
- Selective licence – applies to non-HMO privately rented properties in areas of the city within the designation of a selective licensing scheme implemented by the local authority.

## Local Plan

Sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built within a local authority area. Adopted local plans provide the framework for an area's development. For Nottingham, this consists of the Local Plan [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

## On-street housing

Collective term that includes traditional housing such as HMOs and smaller houses or flats (one to two bedrooms) in which students live.

## Partners

Nottingham City Council (NCC), University of Nottingham (UofN) and Nottingham Trent University (NTU) have jointly developed this strategy.

## Purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA)

Accommodation specifically designed to meet the needs of students. Such schemes can consist of studios (small one-bedroom apartments) or shared cluster flats for several students to share facilities, including kitchens and living spaces. The whole scheme is managed and often provides additional facilities for residents, for example gyms, common rooms, study areas, etc. This term can also be applied to more traditional halls of residence, which are generally developed by educational institutions for the students of one specific institution.

## **Students**

Persons enrolled on a course for at least one academic year at an establishment providing further or higher education.

## **Student households**

Households that can claim student council tax exemption, including those within halls of residence or purpose-built accommodation where all household members are full-time students.

## **Studios**

Single rooms within a PBSA that often have one living space which contains a bed, kitchen and seating area along with a separate bathroom.

## **Supplementary planning document (SPD)**

Documents that add detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or particular issues, such as design.

Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

## **Further details can be found at**

[www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nottinghamstudentlivingstrategy](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nottinghamstudentlivingstrategy)