

# **Nottingham Trent University Written Submission to the Inclusive Growth Commission**

## **Executive Summary**

Alongside a primary focus on supporting and educating people through teaching and research, Nottingham Trent University also acts as an anchor institution where, alongside its main function, it plays a significant and recognised role in the locality by making a strategic contribution to the economy.

Below we outline our evidence to the Inclusive Growth Commission under the RSA's two themes of 'Economy' and 'Place', then offer some research based case studies from the University's academic staff, and finally outline issues from the region of significance for inclusive growth.

## **Introduction**

In addition to verbal evidence provided by Pro Vice Chancellor Eunice Simmons at the RSA's evidence hearing in Nottingham on the 1st of November, Nottingham Civic Exchange, on behalf of Nottingham Trent University (NTU) wishes to highlight a number of strategic initiatives, research areas and recommendations that are of value to the Inclusive Growth Commission.

With a population of just over 300,000, the city of Nottingham is a city of contrasts. Nottingham is culturally diverse and has a thriving city centre and a number of prosperous suburbs. However, the city as a whole is one of the most deprived in England, and has the highest concentration of deprivation in the East Midlands. It is also worth highlighting that Nottingham's Primary Urban Area extends to 650,000 residents.

Traditional economic policy of inward investment, regeneration programmes and prioritisation of economic growth has had some success, particularly in developing investment and infrastructure and in regenerating city hubs. However, when looking at measures such as unemployment, child poverty and skills levels it is clear that populations and places do not benefit equally from these improvements.

Is our definition of economy broad enough? A broad and balanced view of an inclusive economy would take into account wellbeing, environmental impacts, the quality of jobs, inclusivity, and how wealth flows through and around the place. Many initiatives are emerging which provide examples of local economic activity which begins with this definition of a 'good' city economy at its core. Below we outline the contribution NTU is making to the development of inclusivity and this good city economy.

## **Nottingham Trent University's Contribution to Inclusive Growth**

Nottingham Trent University was established in 1843 to increase the standards and skills of the UK design industry and ensure that the UK arrested its decline against our European neighbours. Continuing this commitment, NTU recognises that our offer to the city and region must work to improve outcomes and opportunities for the people of Nottingham. Much of our research and activity is

deeply connected to the city and county and it aims to make a difference locally as well as on an internationally research stage.

Alongside a primary focus supporting and educating people through teaching and research, the University also understands its role as an anchor institution where, alongside its main function, it plays a significant and recognised role in a locality by making a strategic contribution to the local economy. This is a crucial position to hold and sees us using our resources to act as a 'good neighbour' for the city and region's citizens, employers and partners.

Below we outline our evidence under the RSA's two themes of 'Economy' and 'Place', then offer some research based case studies, and finally issues from the region of significance for inclusive growth.

## **1. Economy**

The University contributes to the regional economy in several significant ways.

### **1.1 Strategic alignment**

NTU looks to align with the strategic economic plans of our local and regional partners. Close relationships and strong networks are held with local industry, the public and charitable sectors, LEPs (including those beyond the D2N2 area), local authorities, the Midlands Engine and other regional universities to underpin this alignment. The University is investing in a new Local and Economic Engagement team to oversee and direct the relationship development with these local partners.

We have established compacts across 5 priority thematic areas and an additional compact with our NHS partners. Each of these strategic relationships will be managed by a compact manager in order to facilitate more 'horizontal' conversations focused on the interaction between all of the university's activities and the relevant sector rather than a traditional approach separating out employer engagement, academic research, student placements etc. Compact Managers will have a responsibility to map and gather intelligence on their priority sectors, ensuring this is shared across the University.

Working in part with the Midlands Enterprise Universities consortium, the University will develop an 'ecosystem' of innovation and business support.

### **1.2 Analytical capacity and the Innovation Strategy**

Based within the Nottingham Business School the Economic Strategy Research Bureau provides a range of economic research, evaluation and strategic consultancy services to public, private and third sector clients. It has provided the evidence base for regional economic strategies including the production of a range of evidence reports for the D2N2 LEP. These reports informed a process of strategic planning and engagement between the LEP Board and businesses in key sectors. The ESRB, the University of Nottingham and Derby University led the consultation on the Innovation Strategy. The report describes an analysis of the local economy, covering both the D2N2 LEP and the wider East Midlands and how the University's academic teaching & learning and research strengths

map onto this. Discussions with ESRB in June 2016 confirmed that the recommendations made in 2012 are still valid.

### **1.3 Enabling innovation**

‘Enabling Innovation’ is a three-year collaborative programme involving Nottingham Trent University, the University of Derby, and The University of Nottingham, which will provide support to over 2,000 local small and medium enterprises (SMEs). £10.1m funding is being awarded via the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), using funds secured by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), with an additional £10.2m being invested in the project by the universities.

The objective of Enabling Innovation is to stimulate interest and investment in research and innovation within small and medium-sized businesses in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The programme will focus on developing supply chains in key sectors of particular relevance to the D2N2 LEP area including life sciences, creative and digital industries, transport equipment manufacturing and food and drink manufacturing.

Focusing on ‘enabling technologies’, it aims to stimulate an innovation ecosystem designed to commercialise cutting edge R&D, support product and process innovation within SMEs and drive innovation through supply chains. The three universities will be offering a wide range of services for SMEs through Enabling Innovation, including:

- In-depth support for businesses in sectors such as manufacturing, materials engineering, computing and data, aerospace, food and drink, chemistry and satellite navigation - offering unprecedented access to university expertise and graduate talent.
- Workshop programmes designed to help businesses to innovate, explore new ideas and unlock their growth potential.
- Leadership and management development, including mentoring.
- Support for businesses to take on graduates via placement opportunities, allowing them to explore the benefits of employing graduates.

Enabling Innovation will enable NTU to support businesses to invest in research and innovation; to make them more competitive, and help them to grow and create high-skill jobs with a range of schemes. This will be achieved in a number of ways, including:

- dedicated technical hubs in food and drink, materials engineering, computing and data, and design innovation
- innovation management workshops delivered by Nottingham Business School
- a contribution of 20% towards 60 graduate salaries for up to a year, to support businesses to introduce innovative products, services or processes
- academic and student-led projects and consultancy
- intensive specialist support for innovative businesses
- networking and business development workshops and events.

### **1.4 Big House**

Partners including The Creative Quarter company, Nottingham Trent University, The Hive (Nottingham Trent University's business incubator), the University of Derby, Derby QUAD, New Art Exchange, Derby Theatre, NBV and Nottingham City Council have come together to launch The Big House programme – a three-year, £5 million tailored support programme for the Creative and Digital Industries (CDI) sector in the region, part-funded by £2.5 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with match funding from the Creative Local Growth Fund programme, funded by The Arts Council.

The programme is being launched to improve the ability of the region's CDI SMEs to start-up and grow, so they can take advantage of the UK's booming CDI sector, which contributes just over £84 billion a year to the UK economy. The number of jobs in the creative industries has risen nearly 20% since 2011 to 1.9 million, according to figures from the Department for Culture, Media & Sport. The creative industries grew by 9% in 2014, almost double the size of the nation's whole economy growth – and the sector has increased as a proportion of the total UK gross value added (GVA) for four years running.

According to the D2N2 local enterprise partnership, there are more than 2,300 registered creative and digital businesses in Nottinghamshire, mainly concentrated in the City. Creative England's report of the top 50 creative companies and individuals, published in January, featured five Nottinghamshire firms and people, including GameCity, Jeanie Finlay, AppInstitute, Lockwood Publishing and Wellington Films. The CDI sector employs 25,000 people across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, split roughly between the two counties.

The Big House aims to help many of these businesses to grow and create new jobs in the region, including established SMEs who want to expand and bring new products and services to market, and potential entrepreneurs and start-ups, keen to join a thriving UK business sector. The support on offer will include grants, one-to-one advice, support and coaching and peer-to-peer learning and networking events. The programme aims to support over 500 businesses with over £350,000 of grant funding, matched by private investment.

## **1.5 Enterprise and employability**

A significant undertaking by NTU is a commitment to ensuring that by 2018 every one of our students will undertake an assessed employment related placement as part of their course. This is part of our drive to narrow the attainment and retention gap for students. However, it also a key element to our strategy for graduate retention and a civic and economic contribution to the region.

Currently we have significant support around employability and expect this to be extended as our commitment in this area is further developed. The Employability Team support all NTU students, all NTU graduates for up to three years following graduation and prospective students of NTU who have a confirmed offer of a place.

Our support for enterprise and SMEs includes The Future Factory Research and Consultancy Centre which brings together multidisciplinary expertise and state of

the art equipment into one creative environment. The facility is designed to support businesses and organisations in working with Nottingham Trent University on collaborative projects around smart design, manufacturing, and innovative technologies.

The centre offers expertise on the following topics:

- robotics
- VR Technologies
- LED lighting
- technologies for sustainable development
- renewable energy and sustainability
- built environment and energy efficient buildings
- fabrication and 3D design
- transport and logistics
- instrumentation and sensors.

In keeping with the objectives of Nottingham Trent University, The Hive aims to optimise commercial activity and creative potential by raising the awareness and application of enterprising and entrepreneurial behaviour in our staff, students and graduates. The Hive supports business development through business support services, mentoring, training, and general guidance and advice, as well as office facilities and support for identifying sources of funding. Cumulatively, the businesses supported by the Hive turn over more than £18 million per annum and employ over 700 people.

NTU also supports an SME enquiry line. In 2012, NTU was the first university to launch the Institute of Directors Student Membership Programme. Each year, NTU covers the cost of 200 student memberships for this programme. The IOD is co-located within our city campus.

## **2. Place**

We recognise that universities must act as inclusive civic organisations that add to the growth and development of the places they inhabit.

### **2.1 Place shaping**

A key component of NTU's engagement with the city has been the development of Nottingham Civic Exchange, a place-based Think Tank with a primary focus on issues relating to the city and the region. NCE is working with the RSA to link their work with local and national policy.

Through programmes such as the [Service Learning in Sociology and Criminology](#) to the [Business School's 'Discover Week'](#) where all undergraduate students are set a problem-based challenge focused on the city, we are actively working to support students to better understand their locality and the different social actors within it.

### **2.2 Higher Education participation**

There is a clear association between socio-economic disadvantage, educational achievement and employment opportunities. The largest concentration of deprivation in the city lies within the Nottingham North constituency (the wards of Aspley, Basford, Berridge, Bestwood, Bulwell and Bulwell Forest). Nottingham North has, at 16%, the lowest participation rates in higher education of all parliamentary constituencies in England. Nevertheless, the participation rate has more than doubled from 7% (for the 1998 18-year-old cohort) to 16% (for the 2011 18-year-old cohort). This represents by far the biggest proportional increase in HE participation across Nottinghamshire. It is perhaps no coincidence that this period of growth has been accompanied by a sustained programme of outreach interventions across Nottingham North, whether through the AimHigher funded programme (which ceased in 2011) or the two Nottingham universities own funded outreach programmes.

Nottingham Trent University works in partnership with Nottingham North's primary and secondary schools through the delivery of an extensive range of on-going interventions, including campus visits, specific attainment raising activities and other higher education awareness and aspiration raising activities. Our Schools, Colleges & Community Outreach (SCCO) team programmes reach in the region of 120 Schools and educational providers. For example, in 2012/13, staff from NTU delivered interventions to almost 1,500 pupils attending secondary schools in the Nottingham North constituency. In addition to this, NTU students provided almost 2,500 hours of support in these schools through SCCO's Teacher Associates, Literacy and Mentoring schemes. Such initiatives appear to be bearing fruit in terms of the considerable progress made in higher education progression.

Through longitudinal study we have accumulated a body of evidence which demonstrates that not only does participation lead to improved Key Stage 4 results, but has sustained impact into and through university achievement, extending through to graduate employment. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds who participate in SCCO programmes achieve better than predicated Key Stage 4 results, go on to successfully apply to university, show improved attainment at university including degree classification, and are more likely than their peers to be in work or further study 6 months after graduation.

SCCO participants are disproportionately from disadvantaged backgrounds where progression rates to HE are low. 40% of SCCO participants progress to HE versus 32% for the East Midlands overall, however when broken by socio-economic classification to focus on participants from 20% of the UK population with the lowest young HE participation rates, outreach participant progression to HE stands at 36%, more than double that of the East Midlands at 16% and exceeding that of the government 2020 target for 28% participation. Data over a four-year period indicates that these undergraduate participants consistently achieve higher results year-on-year (approximately 10%) and out-perform their peers by a full degree classification point at graduation; these students also are more likely than their peers to achieve a good degree (2.1 or first). This trajectory continues with other data showing that these groups of students are

considerably less likely to be unemployed and considerably more likely to enter postgraduate study.

### **3. NTU research case studies**

In addition to strategic activities, NTU also holds significant research expertise of relevance to the inclusive growth agenda. Below we highlight selected case studies.

- Exploring the role older workers play in the workforce
- Better understanding of workplace practice
- Developing inclusive community dialogue in a period of economic uncertainty

#### **3.1 Older workers in the workforce**

Research led by [Maria Karanika-Murray](#) has been exploring the role older workers can play in organisations. The ageing workforce is creating unprecedented challenges for organizations and governments but it can also present opportunities for policy makers and employers. WORKAGE demonstrated that targeted workplace interventions to improve job design and work organization can facilitate enhanced engagement and retention of older workers and produce wider benefits for the organization and its employees.

Interventions in a local council and a hospital focused on improving experienced quality of job and workplace practices in order to increase work engagement, workability, and occupational outlook, which in turn influence intentions to retire. A participatory approach that engaged all employee and management was used to develop targeted, relevant, and practical interventions.

Evidence was found that good jobs and workplace practices may be a key to developing sustainable work and supporting active working with measurable impact on retirement plans. It is possible to develop workplace interventions that offer tangible benefits for the workforce and specifically to those closer to retirement. The project has also offered clear messages on the importance of engagement, communication and participation.

This project (WORKAGE project 2013-2016, VP/2012/007/0503) was supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013), and led by Nottingham Trent University, bringing together drawing expertise from policy-makers, practitioners, and academic experts. Further research on older peoples impact on the labour market is also currently being undertaken by Chris Lawton of the Nottingham Business School which explores the impact of older people as workers and it's impact on the UK economy.

#### **3.2 Better understanding of health and workplace practice**

The term sickness presenteeism describes the phenomenon of people attending work despite medical complaints and ill-health that would normally require rest and absence. Presenteeism is unmonitored, prevalent across a range of sectors

and types of jobs and costly for individuals and organizations, in monetary, productivity, and health terms.

Although there is an implicit assumption that presenteeism is implicitly 'bad' and inevitably deleterious for health and performance, new research is showing that presenteeism can be beneficial for performance, well-being, and return to work, if managed well and in cases where the health problem is benign. Specifically, presenteeism can be used as a performance protection strategy and an attempt for individuals to maintain their work performance during an illness, feel more in control over their workload, and maintain a sense of accomplishment that can help to cope with demands after long-term absence due to ill-health or injury.

Presenteeism has to be weighed against the nature of the illness, capabilities of the individual, and requirements of the job. We hope that this work will help organisations to use presenteeism as a strategy for maintaining well-being and facilitating recovery and return to work.

Supporting organisations and employees to make a more informed decision about presenteeism could have a positive impact on productivity, well-being and employee return to work schedules. Developing more nuanced understandings of people's relationships with work needs to be a starting point to help us solve the productivity challenge in the UK. Whilst presenteeism may be a small aspect of this challenge it is one that should not be ignored.

This work is a collaboration between Maria Karanika-Murray - Nottingham Trent University, Manchester Business School, and Laval University in Canada.

### **3.3 Developing inclusive community dialogue**

Mapping Nottingham's Identity began as short term piece of work that supported communities to engage with the identity of their homes and heritage. This has been developed by an NTU academic [Ana Souto](#) with colleagues and residents and builds on a human-centred design approach. This work provides a model for developing stronger community ties and helping residents to articulate community ownership of place. This project will continue in other areas of Nottingham and aims to draw on the RSA's Networked Heritage work.

Another example of the city and NTU's drive to develop inclusive social practices comes from King Edwards Park in Sneinton where NTU Researcher and active skater [Chris Lawton](#) has worked with the City Council, Skate Nottingham and the local community to develop a mixed-use skate park which incorporates the needs of current park users, volunteers and skaters to create an inclusive space which fosters dialogue and connections. Rather than build a 'concrete moonscape' skate park the team has co-produced a design which includes planters and green space that will be developed and managed by the parks garden volunteer group. These inclusive co-creation opportunities are being highlighted and shared to encourage others. They provide a space for community dialogue and help break down traditional barriers between different communities.

### **3.4 Inclusive research and community dialogue projects**



At NTU we have undertaken and continue to develop work that takes a Participatory Action methodology that includes end users, residents and stakeholders in the design, implementation and dissemination of work that can propose solutions to challenges faced across Nottingham.

This has been done with [Graham Bowpitt](#) looking at [complex need homeless groups](#), [Jason Pandya-Wood](#), [Jatinder Sandhu](#), [Linda Gibson](#) and [David Brown](#) working in [BME communities](#) on cancer screening and treatment pathways and uptake for [prostate](#) and [bowel cancer](#) and residents with long-term unemployment profiles supported by [Sharon Hutchings](#). Further Horizon 2020 funding has just been allocated to work with hard to reach communities to tackle cardiovascular conditions led by Linda Gibson, which will share learning across 5 international case studies.

This is an approach we will continue to develop and one, which Nottingham Civic Exchange will support.

## 4 Inclusive Growth issues from the region

### 4.1 Student and graduate support

- Nottingham like many cities across the UK faces challenges in retaining its graduate talent. A number of national studies and work from [our Economic Research and Strategy Bureau](#) in partnership with the Nottingham Post highlighted the challenges faced here. The university is now actively working on solutions to support recent graduates to remain in the city and adds fresh impetus to our strategic goal to ensure all students play an active civic role in the city. The draw of London and the South East is one of the challenges many of the core cities face. As a city, we have been working to explore innovative methods of retaining talent from an internal graduate job network, [our Grads4Nottm programme](#) and work to support graduate housing schemes across the city to ensure they feel welcomed in Nottingham once they have left university.
- Working on a long-term basis with local schools to boost HE participation as described in more detail above. A fully inclusive student support offer for all was recently outlined by our Vice Chancellor Edward Peck:

*"At Nottingham Trent University, we have shown that this broader scale intervention can be successful. In their summer 2014 GCSE exams, 61 percent of 1,129 pupils with whom Nottingham Trent had engaged over a number of years achieved five or more A\*-C grades, compared with 45 percent of all pupils in Nottingham schools. In addition to the participants' absolute Key Stage 4 attainment rates being higher than average, their value-added scores were significantly higher, too.*

*When these students come to study with us, they are also more likely to stay. If they undertake a sandwich year as part of their degree, almost 90 percent of our poorest students get a graduate-level job, the same percentage as our richest students.*

*Is a one school one university approach best? We argue there are other models to explore”*

- NTU has committed to ensuring all of its students are able to access work related learning. Other UK HEIs could commit to providing work-based placements for all students to increase student’s awareness of their locality and the current job market and opportunities, alongside a continued push to make courses locally and professionally relevant.
- HEIs continue to explore new teaching offers for students such as graduate level apprenticeships, which provide a mixed offer for young people and also continue to innovate and test the most successful methods for knowledge dissemination and engagement through programmes like the Trent Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT).
- The UK education system must become more dynamic and flexible to suit the varying job opportunities that young people will face in the near future. Further integrated support is required to help young people consider their future. At NTU all courses are undergoing a curriculum refresh to ensure employability skills and broader employment considerations are part of all modules.

#### **4.2 Clearer place-based marketing and support for a positive employment environment**

- NTU has worked hard to test and assess work support initiatives across Nottingham through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, Future Factory and the HIVE for graduate employment. Anchor institutions need to support and foster an inclusive business environment in their local area and ensure they do not only focus on high profile sectors. We must ensure we support a mixed economic environment that helps micro, SME and large business interests and needs. This environment also needs to be mindful of alternative non-economic measures of success by promoting sustainable and locally focussed practices. Work with our partners is key here and recognises that no one organisation can solve this issue.
- We recognise that not all of Nottingham’s workforce can gain employment in creative and high-tech jobs. Support needs to be developed to upskill residents and ensure they can be competitive in the modern workforce which would act as a positive driver for employers being attracted to the region.

#### **4.3 More integrated services which are able to cross administrative boundaries**

- Inclusive growth can be viewed as an issue for cities. Many of the measures of growth, inclusivity and inequality for Nottingham will be impacted by the city/county boundaries. These do not map directly on to economic, social or psychological geographies. In order to make the comparisons about inclusive growth meaningful, particularly in the case of a city like Nottingham, it is important to ensure we are comparing like with like in the definition of the area under review.

- To achieve more the inclusive growth we need to examine a number of our administrative boundaries. NTU is situated across two Council boundaries and multiple district county lines. Our work is increasingly regional and our knowledge and skills are shared globally. Working with regional organisations such as the LEP is key but an anchor institution such as a large university manages relationships across a range of geographical scales and needs to be able to operate effectively across administrative boundaries.
- Clearer understanding of differing community needs and a focus on community assets is vital. It is not sufficient to provide citywide, or broader, interventions to societal challenges. We need to work with communities on issues that they deem to be important and develop robust methodologies for genuine dialogue.
- We recognise good examples of integrated service delivery locally and regionally. However, continued systemic barriers restrict large scale or geographically spread programmes taking hold and achieving an impact.
- Whilst combined authorities are tackling these issues, this mechanism is not currently available in our region. Over recent months NTU and Nottingham Council have begun to engage on a more regional level through the Midlands Engine and the new city level [strategic partnership with Derby](#) can offer new routes to a more inclusive growth agenda but need to be identified as coalitions of the willing. Nottingham has witnessed the challenge of pressing for combined authorities first hand and NTU is currently playing a role to develop systems, which support and shape the Midlands Engine concept and the UK Government's new Industrial Strategy. We believe it is our role to act as critical friend to these conversations.

**Contact:**

Dr Paula Black

Director, Nottingham Civic Exchange

School of Social Sciences, Chaucer Building, Nottingham, NG1 4BU

[Paula.black@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:Paula.black@ntu.ac.uk)

[@NottsCivicEx](#)

0115 8484635