



# NTU Impact Report

## Autumn 2022



Nottingham Trent  
University

Community Support and  
Collaboration in Mansfield  
and Ashfield

## Foreword by Professor Edward Peck



There has been much debate in recent years about the contribution of universities to social mobility, citizen well-being, and levelling-up within those communities in which they are located and described as anchor institutions. However, there has been less focus on what it would be mean for a university to play such a role within towns or districts within which they have not had a presence historically. In this case, what would be the impact of NTU looking to turn Mansfield and Ashfield into university towns? This is exactly what local stakeholders asked us to do when we first consulted them in 2018.

The truth is that our activities are going to prove transformational. Transformational for the communities, schools, and business with which we engage. Transformational for the way in which we partner with civic agencies in the patch. Transformational for the manner in which we mobilise the commitment of our colleagues across NTU to achieve a shared social purpose. Transformational for the pupils and parents, for the local people and local students, who join us on the journey.

I am very proud of what we have done so far in Mansfield and Ashfield, and there is so much more yet to come.

**Professor Edward Peck CBE DL FAcSS PhD**  
Vice-Chancellor



## The third pillar of our presence in Mansfield and Ashfield

Our first two Impact Reports looked at how NTU's presence in Mansfield and Ashfield is helping to drive levelling up and economic growth in the East Midlands through the provision of higher education and business support.

This third Impact Report focuses on another key pillar of our presence in Mansfield and Ashfield: providing community support and collaborating with schools, community groups and local charities. Our aim is to ensure that local people are able to acquire and use the skills they need to prosper and thrive.

### Collaborating for long-term inclusive growth

The economic and social success of a community cannot be achieved through access to good jobs and skills alone. People need support in many more areas of their lives. For NTU, this includes considering how we support children's early years and how we can help disadvantaged members of the community access the help they need.

We believe we have a duty to harness our expertise and resource through collaborations with community organisations and residents. We listen to what they require. We consider how we can work together to achieve solutions to long-term community issues in the area. In this way, we can contribute ever more to social mobility and local growth in Nottinghamshire.

# Educational outreach in Mansfield & Ashfield

## Schools outreach

NTU provides outreach services at a range of schools in Mansfield and Ashfield. We aim to help schools close the attainment gap for children from more disadvantaged backgrounds and enable those pupils to make better informed decisions about higher education.

Our work is targeted in geographical areas where progression to higher education is traditionally low. We deliver our sessions both at our Mansfield Hub – NTU’s dedicated Higher Education Centre delivering courses and training from in Mansfield – and in schools.

## Primary schools

NTU’s primary schools outreach programme introduces Year 5 and 6 pupils to the concept of university. Through classroom-based activities, they learn about aspects of student life and gain an understanding of the journey from primary school through to higher education.

### Highlights to date include:



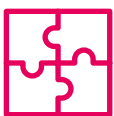
Children’s University:  
120 pupils in Years 5 and 6 at Sutton Road Primary have taken part.



Primary Learning Advocates:  
3 schools encompassing a total of 210 pupils are receiving approximately 500 hours of additional 1:1 support.



START (in partnership with Palace Theatre): 763 pupils from 15 primary schools have received 24 sessions of transition support as they go up to secondary school.



In 2020-21 NTU’s Widening Access and Outreach Team worked with 7 primary and secondary schools to deliver a combination of in-school and on-campus activities.



The importance of the START Transition project becomes more evident as our partnership with Nottingham Trent University continues to develop.

Through the workshop we give the students some tools to help them reflect, communicate how they feel, and build a confidence and resilience for moving forward in life. This work focuses on how the students feel at this moment in time and the varying emotions they are experiencing. It complements the knowledge-based information and practical transition work that secondary schools provide.

As the project grows and we look to reach more Year 6 pupils and work with Year 7 to support them into their secondary school, the value of this work can not be underestimated.

**Christopher Neil, Learning and Aspiration Manager, Palace Theatre Mansfield**





## Secondary schools

NTU's secondary outreach programme provides pupils in Years 7-11 with information about higher education, and through classroom-based sessions enables them to explore the journey from secondary school to higher education.

**Highlights to date in the Mansfield and Ashfield area include:**

- **Core Outreach** delivered in 4 schools in all year groups with almost 2,000 participants.
- **NTU HUB visits** where to date 3 schools have attended with a total of 183 pupils from Years 8 and 9.
- **Achievement Coaches** have supported 60 pupils across three schools with 1:1 tutoring with the aim of raising attainment at GCSE.
- Our **Raising Attainment With Resilience programme (RAWR)** – which aims to improve resilience and reduce test anxiety levels of Year 10 pupils – has been delivered in Kirkby College to 19 pupils.



## Post-16 outreach

NTU works closely with local sixth forms and colleges to prepare prospective university students for their next educational step. To date:

- A total of 72 activities have been delivered across Mansfield and Ashfield to 2,652 students from local colleges and sixth forms, including Information Advice and Guidance workshops designed to help students navigate the university application process.
- An additional 8 subject-specific sessions have been delivered including on-campus activity at our Mansfield and City sites, including advice on choosing the right course, applying to university, student finance and preparation for Clearing.

NTU monitors the impact of all our schools outreach activities. We will track the impact of these initiatives in Mansfield and Ashfield over time as part of our wider evaluation of NTU's presence in the area.

## In focus: the Getting... Ready programme

With the current educational landscape sometimes making it difficult for people to access the skills support they need, NTU undertook research in Mansfield and Ashfield in 2020-21 that led to the development of a new programme to bring stakeholders together in a structured way to try to achieve positive social change.

The programme, called Getting...Ready, involves multiple stakeholders and is designed to build the life skills of young people. It aims to empower parents and communities to become key agents of change in supporting children from their early years through to GCSE level in 'getting ready' for each of the three main stages of their educational and work journeys:

**1** **Getting *School* Ready** focuses on the life and social skills that early years children need for when they go to primary school.

**2** **Getting *Secondary* Ready** focuses on the transition from primary to secondary school – a key point in ensuring pupils stay on track – by setting the foundations for better attainment.

**3** **Getting *Work* Ready** aims to ensure that pupils have the skills and experiences employers need for the modern economy and aims to reduce the number of pupils leaving school not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Getting...Ready currently has two working groups based around two local primary schools: OakTree Primary School and Nursery in Mansfield; and Greenwood Primary and Nursery School in Kirkby in Ashfield. They are implementing the Getting School Ready stage and increasing parental engagement in conjunction with a range of partners.



Through links with NTU, OakTree Primary School has been able to address one of its main priorities: improving parental engagement. Dialogue between home and school has opened up again, parents are engaging with the school and say they feel listened to. The school can now feel as though it can act confidently in the best interests of its community. Key Stage 2 outcomes in reading in 2022 are the highest they've ever been, matching the national average for the first time. The Year 1 phonics pass rate is also the highest it has been, surpassing initial projections.

Educating parents and equipping them with the tools to support their child must not be underestimated. It is an enormous undertaking, which truly reflects Nottingham Trent University as an institution that is imaginative and inspirational in its attempt to aid the wider community socially and culturally.

**Kate Watson, Chief Executive Officer,  
ASPIRE Multi-Academy Trust**





# Community support in Mansfield and Ashfield

## NTU's Community Participation work

NTU's Community Participation work aims to help us understand the experience of students in Mansfield who study at the Mansfield Hub and to strengthen the voice of local residents to ensure both are represented in our regional strategy.

### **Progress to date includes:**

- NTU's Community Consultation, the first round of which finished in March 2022 with 152 responses. Residents raised issues including the regeneration of the town centre, access to digital skills development, and elderly isolation. Focus groups are taking place to examine these issues and identify opportunities to co-design solutions with community partners.
- NTU's Social Prescribing activity with Ashfield Voluntary Action (AVA) helped hundreds of residents access social and financial support to ease challenges posed by Covid-19. The impact of this work has led to the team being awarded £180k to upscale the social prescribing activity across Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood.
- NLS Legal, following consultation through Ladybrook Community Centre, developed a suite of digital materials to support local residents with advice relating to welfare and benefits, housing, and SEND.



## **In focus: Supporting social prescribing in Ashfield**

NTU has worked with Ashfield Voluntary Action (AVA) since early 2021 to help develop local community activities to support Social Prescribing.

Social Prescribing – an NHS service connecting individuals with non-medical needs to community groups and activities – faced difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic. Social restrictions and the closure or restriction of community groups and activities led to a dramatic rise in loneliness and mental health problems resulting in increased GP referrals to Social Prescribing. The most deprived communities were worst affected, and Social Prescribers across Ashfield have struggled to reach those who need them the most and provide them with the appropriate activity to suit their needs.



NTU's Groups, Identities and Health research group's track record of work in this area supported AVA's successful application for £50k to the National Academy of Social Prescribing's Thriving Communities Fund to produce a one-year programme of community activities for local residents.



The Inspiring Ashfield project brought together 30 local community partner organisations to plan a calendar of arts, sports, social and green activities open to local residents as well as NHS Social Prescribing referrals.



The impact of this work has led to further funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council which will enable the upscaling of social prescribing activity across Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood.



## Our other community projects

NTU is actively involved in other projects that support the communities of Mansfield and Ashfield.



**Parent Power** – in partnership with the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Community Outreach Partnership (DANCOP) and the Brilliant Club, we have launched Parent Power working with three schools in Mansfield. Parent Power creates parent communities across the UK, each one supported by an anchor university, empowering parents to make changes to support their children’s future and ensure they have a fair chance in education and their future careers.



**Online map of all loneliness reducing services with evidence of service user needs and experience.** The map covers all of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire and is being used to inform Nottingham County Council’s Tackling Loneliness initiative which includes Mansfield and Ashfield as well as all other districts.



**Collaboration with the Central Library in Mansfield’s Business & IP Centre** to provide advice and support to business owners, entrepreneurs and inventors on trademarks and IP using expertise from NLS Legal.





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