RESEARCH PRIORITIES 2024

By the Community.
For the Community.

Summary

The Co(l)laboratory Research Hub aims to develop, fund, and support community centred research projects which will address challenges that communities in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. To achieve this, the Co(l)laboratory team have developed the Notts Voice in Research (NVR) initiative.

The NVR initiative sought to bring together a diverse range of local community members and community professionals to to take part in a series of discussion workshops and related activities. Starting in April 2024, passionate individuals who work with and are part of our local communities joined a series of workshops to collectively explore and identify the challenges and priorities of Nottingham communities. For the first year, the initiative has focused on issues of importance to communities of Greater Nottingham, with a view to incorporating the wider county from 2025 onwards.

Identifying Priorities

Over the course of 3 discussion based workshops, our participants were able to identify a broad range of challenges which are currently impacting local communities which will become priorities for our next round of research projects to address. Each of the 3 workshops had a different focus where each session built upon the work of the one before.

- Workshop 1 focused on identifying the people and communities at the centre of current areas of need, growth, and development across the city.
- Workshop 2 saw participants take an in-depth exploration into the different types of challenges that the previously identified people and communities are facing.
- Workshop 3 took a step back, looking at all the challenges identified so far to understand where and how different challenges and communities were linked or part of a wider series of factors.

Contributions to these workshops were informed by a combination of the participants' lived experiences as members of different local communities, and as professionals who work with local communities through their community focused organisations. Our participants included members of local organisations such as the NHS, Self Help Nottingham, Nottingham Scouts, Refugee Roots, Nottinghamshire Police, ChalleNGe, and more.

Shaping Research

The outcomes of the NVR workshops were analysed by thematic analysis, allowing us to categorise the wealth of knowledge and insights from our participants into 16 themes. Next, between May-September 2024, these themes were shared with teams of Nottingham researchers and local community organisation partners. These collaborative academic-community teams then worked together to create 16 new research projects, each of which address one or more of the research priorities identified by NVR participants.

Learn more about our community centred research at ufncollaboratory.ac.uk/our-research

Community priorities for research in detail

Social Support

- Strengthening volunteer networks to support vulnerable community members.
- Reducing Social Isolation and promoting community coheseion.
- Strenthening volunteering networks and organisations which rely on volunteering.
- Supporting those isolated from communities/services.
- Young men who feel disconnected from society and the negative impacts of this. Young mens' perceptions and ideas of their roles in society.
- Anti-social social media use – those using SM to isolate/target others. Perpetuation of negative behaviour online & in person.
- Organisations working in isolation on complex challenges who could benefit from coming together.

Education

- Young people transitioning between educational stages - crucial to prevent dropout rates.
- Opportunities for continuous learning to equip residents with skills for modern job markets.
- Supporting teachers and schools and adapting education structures to meet theirs and their students' changing needs.
- Parents navigating educational challenges.
- High exclusion rates within Notts City secondary education system,
- Engaging young people who have difficulty with accessing mainstream education.
- Support for learning/physically disabled parents of, and young people.
- Young peoples' access to creative and cultural programmes.
- Crisis of loss of Arts education in schools - impact on creative industries and need for creativity in teaching other subjects.

Economic Issues

- Poverty reduction
- Economic disparity and resulting disadvantages
- Strategies for economic uplifting of disadvantaged areas.
- Economic empowerment for low-income families through financial management skills.
- Dealing with the impact of budget cuts on sectors and services supporting low-income families and young people.
- Impact of poverty on local children and young people.

Support Services

- Assistance for parents navigating educational and social challenges
- Providing accessible advice centres for various community needs
- Parents seeking support
- Help for low incoming families experiencing multiple challenges.
- Support for young people (and parents of) with disabilities.
- Accessibility for disabled people.
- Digital inclusion and exclusion - older and disadvantaged people.

Community Hubs

- The role of physical, communal spaces like libraries, churches, and community centres in fostering social connections and providing communal services.
- Reduction of accessible venues for community activities and services due to closure of community centres.
- A group of people that share a common space/building
- Role of groups supporting physical activity in improving health and wellbeing.

Environmental Engagement

- Community participation in environmental conservation and awareness.
- Engagement with local wildlife, nature, and the natural environement.
- Promoting activities that connect community members with local nature reserves and conservation projects.
- Better access for disadvantaged and overlooked communities to nature groups, events, and initiatives.

Crisis Management

- Response and resilience to immediate and emerging crises, particularly in the educational and artistic sectors.
- Concerns about the removal of the arts from education and its long-term impact on the creative industries and education.
- Structural changes to support for at-risk students in schools.
- Consultation Fatigue – Communities relied increasingly for insights but value for them is seen to be minimal.

Health and Wellbeing

- Complementary interventions for physical and mental health which facilitate social interaction such as walking group, etc., and community mental health support initiatives.
- Increasing need for communities to have resources and know-how to be able to support those with mental health challenges.
- Local systems and structures needed for improving social care.
- Challenges with quitting smoking and link with disadvantaged communities.

Public Policy & Governance

- Effectiveness of local governance and public policies - engagement strategies, transparency, and trust.
- Efforts to increase public participation in local government decisions.
- Building trust between residents and local authorities.
- The role of community campaigning groups work with local government.
- Lack of trust in local systems and strucutres, i.e., the NHS, local authorities, social care, educational, etc.
- Resilience and long-term thinking for policy in response to budget cuts.

Healthcare Workforce

- Challenges faced by healthcare professionals - staffing, engagement, and motivating future generations to join the healthcare sector.
- Local NHS staffing and student/trainee shortages require targeted recruitment and retention strategies.

Economic Access

- Accessibility of financial resources and services.
- Sustainable, inclusive growth and economic opportunities.
- Accessibility issues for low-income families in claiming benefits and support.
- Affordability and safety of public transport and its impact on economic mobility, particular low-income families

Rights and Advocacy

- Protection and awareness of individual rights - importance of advocacy and legal support for disadvantaged communities.
- Accessibillity of legal services.
- Promoting awareness and support for civil, social, and economic rights.

Safety and Security

- Transportation safety and wider impacts.
- Collaboration with Nottinghamshire Police to enhance community safety.
- Addressing hate crimes and promoting tolerance and safety for all.
- Factors impacting youth violence and community solutions.
- Anti-social social media users perpetuating negative behaviour online & in person.

Youth Engagement

- Social disengagement among young people and wider impacts for them.
- Supporting young people to navigate educational and social challenges.
- Young men's social cohesion and perceptions of their roles in society.
- Youth violence and disengagement

Creative Industries

- Integration of creativity into local economies and educational systems.
- Role of creative sector in local cultural, community and economic development

Diversity and Inclusion

- Building inclusive cultures and environments to support community cohesion.
- Tailored initiatives to promote understanding and reduce biases in Nottingham's rich, unique cultural mix.
- People disconnected from communities and services due to social isolation.

Projects and their community priorities

Research Projects & number of priorities addressed

Improving recognition of autistic young people's stress behaviours in mainstream and specialist Nottingham schools	**16**
Developing a community-led approach to inclusive growth in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	**14**
Nottingham welcomes Refugees: unravelling the mental health challenges of refugees to enhance support and foster integration	**13**
Eating for Health: Addressing health inequality by improving food and nutrition	**11**
Responding to post-diagnostic support needs for late-diagnosed autistic adults in Nottingham/shire	**9**
What are the benefits and challenges of volunteering for domestic violence and abuse organisations for those with lived experience?	**9**
Establishing and evaluating a person-centred approach to supporting individuals living with cognitive impairments in Nottingham	**9**
Popular Protest and Political Representation in Nottingham: Drawing contemporary lessons from the 1850s and 1860s	**8**
Scalable Virtual Power Plants: Supporting rural community energy systems in Nottinghamshire through innovation	**8**
Our Community, Our Voices: Stories about Oak Tree estate created by Oak Tree residents	**7**
Comfort, control and safety: Developing a decarbonisation strategy for public CLASP buildings in Nottinghamshire	**7**
Sustainable resources and Wellbeing: Scoping the holistic benefits of community leaf gathering in Nottingham	**5**
Engaging with and Communicating Music Opportunities to Children and Young People across Nottinghamshire	**4**
Beyond Green: Community Participation towards Resilient Urban Nature	**4**
Developing New Artists, Artist Groups and Organisations in Nottingham	**3**
Improving health and wellbeing through better understanding of air pollution - health relationships	**3**

Priority Areas

- Public policy and governance
- Health and wellbeing
- Social support
- Economic issues
- Education
- Support services
- Diversity and inclusion
- Environmental engagement
- Healthcare workforce
- Economic access
- Community hubs
- Creative industries
- Rights and advocacy
- Youth engagement
- Safety and security
- Crisis management