

Proposal and Interim Action Plan for the Nottingham City Sustainable Food Partnership

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Disclaimer: The following proposal and interim action plan presents a synthesis of evidence and feedback from two years of stakeholder workshops and consultations to inform the establishment and development of the Sustainable Food Partnership in the city of Nottingham. The NTU MARKETS Group has led a co-designed process towards a whole systems approach aimed at tackling Nottingham's acute food insecurity/poverty crisis while also improving its environmental and economic sustainability for current and future generations of residents. This final document is based on several drafts and iterations which were improved as part of the co-design and

consultation process. It reflects a collective agreement worked out by the interim steering group members from September to December 2024 to officially launch the Nottingham City Sustainable Food Partnership, proceed with an interim action plan through December 2025 and explore the partnerships financial maintenance.

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1. Introduction

The Nottingham City Sustainable Food Partnership (NCSFP) is envisaged as a 'quadruple helix' collaboration among organisations and groups drawn from four sectors: public, private, community and university. The aim is to establish a city-wide food partnership anchored in a whole-system approach that can be coordinated through a steering group and operationalised through existing and/or emerging stakeholder working groups. Stakeholders have indicated they would like a City of Nottingham SFP to promote activity in a number of priority areas, which include:

- Structured coordination of communication, knowledge exchange, resourcing and action across existing food groups and initiatives
- Coordinated and data driven response to food insecurity and food poverty
- Increase in the opportunities for local and sustainable food production and supply to public institutions and consumers
- Reduction in food waste and efficient use of surplus
- Education about food and health in schools to promote healthy food choices and nutrition
- Facilitating local growing among children and residents
- Participation in the national/international good food movement

This document proposes a set of core aims, an interim action plan and governance framework for a Nottingham City SFP, which has been co-produced by local stakeholders, with the advice of the Nottinghamshire Sustainable Food Network, the <u>Sustainable Food Places</u> programme and more advanced food partnerships from around the country. The proposal links with several key policy drivers, including Nottingham City Council (NCC)'s <u>Eating and Moving for Good Health</u>, Nottingham's Economic Plan for Growth, Nottingham City Council Strategic Council Plan 2024-27, Nottingham City Children and Young People's Plan 2021-24, Carbon Neutral Nottingham 2028, the <u>East Midlands Combined County Authority's Strategic Framework and Early Investment Plan</u> and the <u>Midlands Engine Food White Paper 2024</u>.

Finally, this proposal for a food partnership is inspired by and consolidates the incredible work that is already being done across stakeholder groups and communities. Its fundamental purpose is to develop an infrastructure for enhancing coordination of communications, exchanges and resource planning across these groups and communities – not to supplant or recreate the existing work already being done. Most notably, Nottingham Good Food Partnership – the precursor to current efforts - deserves recognition for having paved the way through its relationships, advocacy and innovative work, such as the co-creation of the Nottingham City Wellbeing Design Guide.

The contents include:

- Background on the developments towards this SFP proposal;
- The problem landscape and policy context;
- · Partnership themes and interim action plan;
- Governance structure, finance and communications plan.

In this proposal, we use the following terms:

Sustainability - The sustainable production and consumption of food is "key to sustaining the livelihoods of current and future generations" (United Nations). Public food procurement is seen as a "game changer" since it can drive changes in both production and consumption due to the level of demand (FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION 2021). Our aim is to establish a system of public procurement that prioritises environmental, economic and social sustainability, promotes circular economies, facilitates access for the community sector and promotes the sale of locally grown produce to Nottingham/shire people and visitors. By choosing what products to buy, by establishing conditions for their production and processing, and defining geographical areas for priority procurement, local authorities can leverage significant changes in the environment, economy and societies where food is produced (FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION 2021).

Food Security – "A person is food insecure when they lack regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life" (FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION website 2024).

Procurement – 'The process of acquiring the goods, services and works an organisation needs. Procurement spans the identification of needs and deciding what is bought and when; the process of awarding a contract, including defining the terms on which the goods, services or works are to be provided and selecting the contracting partner, and managing the contract to ensure effective performance' (Nottingham City Council Procurement Strategy 2018-2023).

2. Background: The Journey toward a Nottingham City Sustainable Food Partnership

Plans for a City of Nottingham SFP have emerged through the work of the Multi-Actor Research & Knowledge Exchange Team (MARKETs) group at Nottingham Trent University. MARKETs is an approach to stakeholder engagement and place-based problem-solving that is grounded in quadruple helix and systems thinking principles, joint action and impact, deep listening practices, relationship facilitation and policy research.

The development of a Nottingham City SFP has been an organic process, which began with a focus on food poverty and insecurity. It has gradually broadened to encompass the wider food system:

MARKETs → Food Partnership

Date	Activity
2022	MARKETs inaugural meeting between NTU and NCC agreed to focus on food insecurity
2023	 Workshop of more than 50 stakeholders addressed city's response to food insecurity Policy Lab made recommendations on how to develop a wholesystem response to food insecurity
2023-24	Stakeholder deep listening to test Policy Lab recommendations for a wholesystem response
2024	 Workshop on harnessing urban agriculture and local food procurement Interviews with Sustainable Food Places and Sustainable Food Partnerships across UK Alignment between MARKETs, Nottingham City Council, the Eating and Moving for Good Health Strategy, Nottingham Economic Growth Plan and other local/regional policies Securing stakeholder commitment to creating a Notts City Sustainable Food Partnership Research, organising and lobbying Partnership kick-off in April followed by draft proposal and consultations
2024-25	Establishment of steering group, terms of reference, interim action plan, funding partnership coordinator, joining Sustainable Food Places network
NTU	

In April 2023, a workshop with more than 50 stakeholders met in the city to consider how best to respond to high levels of food insecurity. This was followed by a 'policy lab', which produced recommendations on how to create a whole-system approach to food insecurity in Nottingham, including the establishment of a food partnership.

Further work tested the recommendations in a series of interviews and deep listening engagements with local stakeholders and external experts. The value in taking a broader approach to food security in Nottingham began to emerge, leading to a workshop on urban/peri-urban growing, public sector procurement and education, which was jointly organised by University of Nottingham (UoN), NTU and the community sector organisation, Honeybee Farmacy. This phase of the work highlighted the value in expanding a City of Nottingham Food Partnership to also incorporate a coordinated approach to growing, supply, food waste, education, skills development and health promotion, as well as maintaining a focus on food and nutritional insecurity. In parallel, Nottingham City Council (NCC) have researched the local food system and have developed the *Eating and Moving for Good Health* (EMGH) policy and delivery plan. This process included consultation with more than 40 groups and organisations to co-produce EMGH.

The proposal for a Nottingham City SFP Proposal was further developed at a workshop held in April 2024, which included 40 key stakeholders and contributions from Food Matters (who oversees the Sustainable Food Places programme in the UK) and the coordinator of the Nottinghamshire Sustainable Food Network, Kathy Holmes. The workshop goals were to brainstorm the aims, principles and governance of a Nottingham City SFP as well as to identify urgent and feasible actions that can be implemented in 2024-25 with the support of a funded partnership coordinator.

At the workshop, attendees self-selected their own groups based on different themes at each table (e.g. steering group representation, working principles and incorporating resident lived experience). The four groups broadly included representatives of each strand of the quadruple helix, as well as a range of interests (e.g. sustainable production, food insecurity, education etc). Comments were recorded via flip charts, on <u>Padlet</u> and through the notes made by table coordinators.

In the spring and summer of 2024, the MARKETs group at NTU drafted a proposal for the Nottingham City SFP, which was informed by the numerous stakeholder engagement activities highlighted above. During this period, the draft was circulated among a wider net of stakeholders for comment and feedback. This proposal, therefore, is a culmination of the extensive consultation and engagement processes which formed the MARKETs group's SFP development work between 2022 and 2024.

3. Problem Landscape, Policy Context and Strengths: A Cursory Review of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Food System

The proposal is a response to the following challenges and opportunities presented within the local/regional food system. Each of these themes has been informed by the research, workshops and conversations which were led by the MARKETs group. They form the basis of the proposed action plan themes/priorities further below.

3.1. Food Insecurity

Health inequality presents a major challenge for Nottingham. To begin with, the city's residents experience lower life expectancy than the English and East Midlands average and lower healthy life expectancy (NCC/Nottingham Growth Board 2024, p. 24). Nationally, the proportion of people experiencing food insecurity has almost doubled in the last two years, according to the Food Foundation (2023) (Appendix 1). In Nottingham, the data suggests a more disturbing picture (Appendix 2). In 2021, using small-area estimation techniques, 11% of adults in Nottingham (approx. 30,000 people) were estimated to be struggling to obtain enough food having skipped or shrunk a meal in the last month (Blake and Whitworth 2021). But a survey of Nottingham residents (Appendix 2), conducted on behalf of Nottingham Financial Resilience Partnership in 2024, found that 39% of adults said they had reduced or skipped meals in the previous week, (corresponding to 121,000 people). While the studies are not directly comparable, the results hint at dramatically increasing need, which would be consistent with a city population with a profound lack of financial resilience that has endured a cost-of-living crisis.

The city's notable population characteristics include high population density in the region, a low median age, considerable diversity and high multiple deprivation. According to the 2021 census, with a population of 323,627 people (+5.9% 2011), Nottingham is the second most densely populated of the East Midlands' 35 local authority areas, with around 31 people living on each

football pitch-sized area of land' (ONS 2022b). What is more, it is ranked the 11th most deprived out of the 317 districts in England (Nottingham Insight IMD 2019). One-third of the population lives in the most deprived 'Lower Super Output Areas' (LSOAs) - the so called 'worst 10%.' Another 47.8% live in the second and third most deprived LSOAs (10.1-20% and 20.1-40%, respectively).

Nottingham is a city of the young. The median age is 31 years, one of the lowest of all Local Authority Areas in the UK (ONS 2022). With two major universities based in the city, it also boasts a high student population (16.1% of the usual resident population). This is the third highest proportion of all Local Authority areas, behind only Oxford and Cambridge. University of Nottingham scientists presented a study in 2022 which revealed 'that 28% of the student population [in the UK] reported themselves as food insecure, a figure that doubles the national average of 8–10% in 2021' (Aldubaybi et al. 2022).

Nottingham city boasts a highly diverse population. The 2021 Census shows 42.7% of the population as being from BME groups; an increase from 35% in 2011. People in a household from a Black/African/Caribbean/Black British ethnic group were most likely to experience food insecurity (21%), followed by people in a household where the reference person was from a Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (19%) (Nottingham Insight Population 2024). In addition, 26.2% of the population were born outside of England, with the largest numbers from Pakistan, Poland, India and Nigeria. It is important to consider that these populations are also likely to be impacted by food insecurity or cost-of-food increases due to their sometimes more economically precarious situation (Francis-Devine 2024).

Nottingham residents are the third poorest in the country in terms of their gross disposable household income (see Appendix 3). But while low income is a primary factor leading to food insecurity, Nottingham stakeholders say the problem is more accurately described as low financial resilience. This reflects inadequate benefit levels (JRF 2023), a welfare system that can penalise claimants (Goudie 2023), preponderance of low-paid employment (Lawton et al 2019), lack of financial skills, poor educational attainment, low levels of numeracy, high proportion of private renters/high rents, among other indicators (see Appendix 3) and all of that combined with vulnerabilities of people living with deprivation (Nottingham Insight IMD 2019). In addition, a low level of social mobility suggests many residents in Nottingham are locked into poverty and may remain vulnerable to food insecurity over a long period (Social Mobility and Poverty Commission 2016).

Food poverty is linked to profound impacts on the health of the UK population, and children in particular. "Children in England are now shorter and more likely to have obesity and type 2 diabetes, with long term health prospects," according to the Food Foundation (2024a). Since 2013, the average height of UK children aged 5 years has been falling. Boys are now the shortest among other high-income (HIC) countries and girls the second shortest. (Food Foundation 2024a)

In recognition of this landscape, Nottingham City Council's Eating and Moving for Good Health policy has set out a programme of activity to address food insecurity and nutrition, including among children. In addition, the new Labour government has pledged to provide more support to children and parents, including offering free breakfast clubs in every primary school in England (Labour 2024).

3.2. Food Procurement

The production and consumption of food and the handling of food waste account for 20-30% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally (Molin et al 2021). With an increasing population and changing patterns of consumption, the environmental impacts of agriculture are set to increase, fuelling climate change and threatening food security.

All of the major public institutions in Nottinghamshire are committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions in their operations and increasing the proportion of food sourced from local producers. Nottingham City Council's Carbon Neutral Nottingham Action Plan, which supports its Carbon Neutral 2028 policy, states that 'we have a role to play... to support the most sustainable approaches to food and drink. The plan pledges to 'buy more local and sustainable food and drink' and address a range of key issues including, 'the development of a sustainable food strategy for Nottingham'. The University of Nottingham supports the city council's CN28 agenda. Similarly, Nottinghamshire County Council's Net-Zero Framework 2024 includes a commitment to support "support the work with farmers and landowners to encourage low-carbon practices that produce local, homegrown, farm-to-fork produce". And Nottingham Trent University has a Net Zero Carbon 2040 policy.

Nottingham, unlike some other British cities, has very tight boundaries, which means there is very little agricultural land available. Of the 147,000 people in England employed in crop and animal production, just 10 of them work within the Nottingham city boundary, (compared to 2,250 in Nottinghamshire) (ONS 2022a). However, Nottingham is surrounded by highly productive counties, including, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire, as well as Nottinghamshire itself.

We envisage a local and sustainable food sourcing working group, which encompasses local authorities, the community, academic and private sectors across the city and county.

Nottingham/shire institutions (councils and universities) have started working together to explore how to leverage their catering/food spend to encourage more sustainable food production, processing and delivery within their supply chains. Building on work already completed, including on the feasibility of a Farm Start programme in Nottinghamshire (McIlroy et al 2024), these institutions are developing a roadmap to create a more local, sustainable food procurement system.

In addition, the Nottingham/shire community sector has expressed an interest in working with these institutions to secure healthy food at the best possible prices to support local food banks, pantries and social eating projects. And the local authorities are keen to promote and support the sale of local produce to consumers and visitors.

3.3. Urban Growing

Nottingham may not have much agricultural land, and it has a high population density, the ninth highest of all UK local authorities outside London (ONS 2023), but it does have a significant number of allotments, community gardens and accessible green space within the city boundary. In

Nottingham, there more than 20 volunteer-run allotment associations managing hundreds of individual plots (Ram 2019). There are further private and council-run allotments. In addition, there is a vibrant community of growers in the Nottingham Growing Network and around 10 established community gardens and growing projects. These allotments and growers already supply food to projects in the city, but there is the potential to develop that further by harnessing existing knowledge and expertise, as well as coordination, within a working group of a City of Nottingham SFP. These plots and growers present a significant growing resource within the urban area.

Furthermore, Nottingham is a 'green city'. Nottingham City Council highlights one study conducted by Ordnance Survey (NCC 2017), which found that more than 15% of land in Nottingham was accessible green space, the second highest figure of any local authority in the country. The prevalence of green space creates the possibility of establishing new growing areas within the city boundary and increasing local, sustainable food production. NCC has continued to work with Ordnance Survey (OS 2024) to use new software to map green space more accurately and to contribute to the council's Greenspace Strategy, to promote health and wellbeing among residents, encourage biodiversity and support the delivery of the CN (carbon neutral) 28 target. The latest study found that 37% of built-up areas in Nottingham are green or blue (bodies of water/areas near water) space. There are already urban growing schemes in the city, e.g. the Arkwright Meadows Community Gardens and Gamble St Corner run by Himmah, which could inform future development.

3.4. Primary Education and Supporting Children

Urban growing presents a valuable opportunity for education through the development of 'edible classrooms' (Heynes 2024). These are spaces for primary school children to grow produce and gain a greater understanding of food production sustainability, and nutrition, which can support healthy food choices for them and their families. Edible classrooms can exist at a micro level, where one school accesses a single plot (e.g. St Edmund Campion Catholic Voluntary Academy, which accesses an allotment site behind the school); or on a large scale where multiple schools can visit and learn (e.g. Stanford Hall CSA, a 7-acre community farm in Leicestershire). Schemes like edible classrooms, coupled with transparent school food supply chains, allow children to follow the food they are served from farm to fork.

The Food Foundation estimates that 20% of families with children experience food insecurity (Food Foundation 2023). Food insecurity in children increases mental and physical health risks and affects educational and lifetime attainment (Hartgen-Walker 2023). Schools are in the frontline of the response to food insecurity: One in five now operate a food bank (Baker et al, 2024). A City of Nottingham SFP should work hard address the impact of a high rate of food insecurity on children and their development. It would have a key role in tackling food poverty among children. This might involve campaigning to maximise access to existing support (Walker and Kankanamge 2023; LGA 2023), for example, extending availability of free school meals to all children from families in receipt of Universal Credit. In addition, a City of Nottingham SFP could explore food support offered at school sites, such as social eating schemes, food pantries, welfare advice, budgeting and cooking courses.

3.5. Labour in the Farm and Food Sector

Farming in the UK is facing a major challenge due to an ageing workforce. There is a need for a new generation of young farmers. The average age of the UK farmer is 59. Figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS 2023) show that 35 per cent of UK farmers are already aged over 65 years, with another 32% aged between 55 and 64 years. Only 1% of farmers are aged 16-24 years. The ONS has warned that the high average age of farmers "pose[s] challenges for labour supply in the future if not enough young people go into that type of work". This has led to fears over UK food security (Nolsoe 2023). Food security is a complex balance that depends upon 'the resilience of all parts of the food system, separately and combined', but clearly domestic production is a critical element (Dimbleby 2022).

Proponents of developing a strong food education strand in primary schools highlight one of the benefits as helping young people to 'see careers in food and farming as viable and exciting' (Heynes 2024). In addition, schemes that link employment support to training in horticulture or food production can also help develop a future workforce. However, local people need to have a path into farming, not only through training, but also access to land, support and mentors, and routes to market. One option to deliver this is through the Farm Start initiative. A feasibility study (McIlroy 2024) conducted by a team from the Urban Agriculture Consortium, commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council, identified some of the barriers facing potential entrants to the farming sector, but also benefits and opportunities for establishing a scheme in this area. In addition, Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham, which both participated in the Farm Start feasibility study, are national leaders in agriculture training and research and associated disciplines. An expert working group, which spanned city and county sustainable food partnerships, could coordinate efforts in agriculture workforce development.

Future employment opportunities around food are not limited to farms. Logistics, processing, food technology, packaging, retail, catering and hospitality are all areas of potential growth in the local economy. Almost 2,000 people are currently employed in the manufacture of food and drink in Nottingham and 12,000 are engaged in service-related activities around food and drink (ONS 2022a). In Nottinghamshire, it is 8,000 and 21,000 people, respectively (ONS 2022a).

A recent Food White Paper by Midlands Engine (2024) noted that 'more than half (52%) of larger food and drink manufacturing companies (£100m+ turnover) and a fifth of agri-tech businesses in the UK are based in the Midlands (p. 5). In addition, there are 45 universities, colleagues and research centres working in the food system as well as £3bn industry investment per year in growth (p.5). Nottingham city is ideally situated to benefit from and contribute to this key sector.

Nottingham has the infrastructure in place to support training and development in this sector. Nottingham College, Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham all provide extensive training/learning opportunities in food and drink related disciplines. In addition, the Food and Drink Forum, based in Bestwood, supports food and drink businesses, from start-ups to established operators, and the University of Nottingham's Food Innovation Centre provides leading scientific/technical advice to Food & Drink manufacturing businesses in the UK

3.6. Nottingham Food Charter or Strategy

Food Charters are used to simply state a Sustainable Food Partnership's purpose and key goals. They provide an accessible summary of a partnership's priorities and sometimes their key actions. They are helpful for members of the partnership because they articulate clearly what the SFP is trying to achieve and why. And they help a partnership promote their work to individuals and organisations outside the inner circle. The aim is for citizens and businesses to be excited by what's going on and to sign up to show their support. In that way, it can serve as a mechanism to capture interest and develop a database of supporters. Some charters include actions individuals and organisations can take themselves and signing up counts as a pledge to take those steps.

Sustainable Food Places suggests that a Food Charter can be:

- clear statement of what you are trying to achieve
- tool for promoting the Food Partnership
- convening document to build momentum towards establishment of a Food Partnership
- focus for recruiting and galvanising key partner organisations and individuals
- structure or framework upon which to build your Food Strategy and Action Plan

For example, the <u>Birmingham Food Charter</u> sets out its vision and priorities, The <u>Bristol Food Charter</u> is tailored for individual or organisational action, while the <u>Leicester Food Charter</u> includes its vision and ambitions with links to further information.

Meanwhile, a food strategy 'sets out a unifying vision for a city's food system and commits to creating the conditions in which a healthy, just and sustainable food system can flourish' (The Food Foundation 2022). The London Food Strategy is an example of a whole systems approach which establishes a vision and actions to ensure that 'every Londoner' has access to 'healthy, affordable and good food' (Greater London Authority 2018). With a systems view, it covers the economic, social, environmental dimensions of food, establishing cross-cutting actions and linkages to other mayoral strategies. It was developed by the Greater London Authority in partnership with the 17-member London Food Board representing food production, retail, hospitality, healthcare, education, academia and the third sector.

There are opportunities to align local strategies with national-level policy levers. In 2022, the national government also published a 'Government Food Strategy,' responding to the Dimbleby Review which included policy initiatives to boost health, sustainability, accessibility of diets and to secure food supply, ensuring that domestic producers and the wider food and drink industry contributes to the levelling up agenda and makes the most of post-Brexit opportunities' (Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2022). Meanwhile, the new Labour government has pledged to tackle child obesity, commit to universal free breakfast clubs for all primary school children and address cost of living (Food Foundation 2024b). It has also pledged to champion British farming by setting a 'target for half of all food purchased across the public sector to be locally produced or certified to higher environmental standards' (Labour Party Manifesto 2024, p. 60).

3.7. Leveraging System Strengths through a 'More-than-Food' Partnership

Nottingham city has specific system characteristics and parameters (discussed above) which in certain respects both distinguish it from Nottinghamshire county and can galvanize members around a more-than-food mission through a systems thinking lens.

- High levels of deprivation, income insecurity and labour market inactivity combined with low financial resilience
- High student numbers and a relatively young population
- Highly diverse communities, in terms of ethnicity, race and religion
- Tight city boundaries which affect access to growing spaces

A more-than-food approach sees food as a unifying theme which focuses efforts around a broader set of environment, economic and social challenges in a more joined-up way. One example of the more-than-food approach is Megan Blake's 'food ladders,' (Blake 2024), which are aimed at building local resilience 'in the face of' food insecurity. It proposes three levels of intervention which advocate for:

- 'Mobilising the more than nutrient, calorie and commercial aspects of food, such as its capacity to bring people together to foster shared understanding and collaboration;
- Creating safe and inclusive spaces for experimentation and interaction with food;
- Using a positive language of empowerment around food;
- Building place-specific levels of support that enable the recognition and enhancement of locally based skills and assets to create transformations in communities.'

Another example is the 'Pathways Out of Poverty' rubric proposed by Pettman et al (2024), which is a detailed model of best practice in delivering food support in a dignified, inclusive way to build trust. The model articulates the activities and support that may help people, within this positive space, to develop more secure lives.

In other words, more-than-food is not just about ensuring the adequate supply of sustainably sourced and nutritious food. It can be a catalyst for building community, social capital and wellbeing. It also serves as a gateway to jobs, financial resilience and independence. Food can therefore serve as a unifying force to address a number of intersecting issues through collaborative partnerships.

At the heart of this proposal is the recognition that the food system is complex, presenting both risks and opportunities for societal cohesion. In the spirit of the 'more than food' approach, the Nottingham partnership should understand the food system as an *enabler*. While the UK system is significantly challenged by insecurity of supply, high demand and cost-of-living, there is also great potential to harness collaboration across different areas, in order to promote a joined-up, whole systems *and* 'more than food' approach.

To achieve this, Nottingham already boasts a number of strengths which can be leveraged, including:

- Location in the Midlands, with a strong agriculture and food sector at its doorstep
- Strong civil society prevalence and networks;
- Achievements of the Nottingham Financial Resilience Partnership through multisector partnership methods (including the Food Bank group);
- Community groups that are responding to the acute food crisis and networks that were formed under the Nottingham Good Food Partnership and Covid-19 pandemic;
- Universities for Nottingham collaborative, multisector framework, which can draw on combine strengths of the universities in terms of impact research, community engagement as well as student and community engagement.

A food partnership offers potential to harness and our existing strengths to:

- coordinate local procurement and urban/peri-urban agriculture, as well as investment in local agri-and-food sectors, to alleviate cost of food;
- alleviate isolation and deprivation through food projects and services that help communities build social capital;
- invest in and development of further and higher educational courses/programs to both support the agri-and food sectors (from small to large businesses) and offer a route out of poverty for local communities;
- work with schools on multiple fronts, including as suppliers of nutritious food, hubs for support services and 'farm to fork' educational programmes to cultivate appreciation for locally produced and nutritious foods as well as to promote careers in the agriculture/food sector.

These combined strengths could be further bolstered by membership in the Sustainable Food Places national network. Sustainable Food Places brings together pioneering food partnerships in towns, cities, boroughs, districts and counties across the UK. It supports innovation, best practice, knowledge exchange in the wider SFP network and facilitates access to funding. It can bring

together organisations from all sectors to tackle food insecurity, sustainability, healthy eating, growing and promotion of good food. The national network has helped localities across the UK:

- to establish a cross-sector food partnership involving local authority and public sector bodies, third sector organisations, businesses and academic institutions;
- to develop a vision, strategy and action plan for making healthy and sustainable food a
 defining characteristic of where they live; and
- to work together to realise that vision through concerted and coordinated action across a wide range of food issues.'

There are numerous benefits to joining the national network, including privileged access to the expertise of peers and to regional and national events, support of the Sustainable Food Places team, taking part in campaigns, applying for awards and full access to online toolkits and resources.

4. Partnership Principles and Themes

The themes below correspond with the evidence-led themes framing the <u>Sustainable Food Places</u> programme, which informs food partnership developments across the UK. They reflect the co-production process we followed in Nottingham as well as the Sustainable Food Places framework. They also strategically link with key local and regional policies, including Nottingham City Council (NCC)'s <u>Eating and Moving for Good Health</u>, <u>Nottingham's Economic Plan for Growth</u>, <u>Nottingham City Council Strategic Council Plan 2024-27</u>, <u>Nottingham City Children and Young People's Plan 2021-24</u>, <u>Carbon Neutral Nottingham 2028</u>, the <u>East Midlands Combined County Authority's Strategic Framework and Early Investment Plan and the Midlands Engine Food White Paper 2024</u>.

These themes are informed by research into the challenges with Nottingham's food system and the deep listening events and conversations conducted by NTU MARKETs Group from 2022 to 2024. They will frame the interim action plan. The partnership will establish working groups under each theme. One of the first tasks of each working group will be to refine or rework the purpose and vision of their theme (see Section 5 for more information on 'working groups' and SFP structure).

1. Food Secure and Financially Resilient Nottingham	Working towards a food secure, financially resilient as well as physically and mentally healthy resident population in the city.
2. Grow and Eat Nottingham	Harnessing urban and peri-urban agriculture to play a part in the nutrition, health and (physical and mental) wellbeing of residents.
3. Local, Sustainable Food Sourcing	Establishing a system of public procurement that prioritizes environmental, economic and social sustainability, promotes circular economies, facilitates access for the community sector, and promotes direct sales from local producers to consumers and visitors
3. Cultivating Young People	Connecting young people to healthy and locally grown food and harnessing schools as hubs for supporting healthy food choices for children and their families.
5. Future Food Workforce	Exploring opportunities to educate and train young people and adults so that they can access jobs and careers in the food sector, hospitality and even agriculture.
6. Joined-up Nottingham	Establishing and coordinating a sustainable food partnership in the city that leverages existing strengths within Nottingham through a whole systems, multisector and 'more-than-food' approach.

Together, the themes culminate in the following vision and set of guiding principles for the partnership:

	Vision							
	Create a food secure, financially resilient, enterprising, socially just and green Nottingham							
		Prir	nciples					
In recognition of N	ottingham's characteristic		is action plan's six themes a principles.	re laced together by t	he following cross-			
			, primorptoo.					
Prioritizing the food	Working with and	Investing in our	Harnessing the potential	Supporting the	Universities			
insecurity	learning from	young people	of local procurement,	development of	working at the			
emergency	Nottingham's diverse		community gardens and	circular	centre of the			
	populations to		urban agriculture to be	economies,	partnership, as			
	address differing		part of the solution in	reducing pressure	anchor and broker			
	needs, leverage		addressing food	on resources and	institutions, to			
	creative approaches		insecurity, poor nutrition	effectively	ensure that joint			
	and empower citizens		as well as promoting	monitoring,	actions are			
	and communities		healthy lifestyles and	managing and	turbocharged by			
			social capital	minimising waste	impact research			
					and student-			
					community			
					engagement			

5. Proposed Governance Structure and Financing

5.1. Overview

It is proposed that a Nottingham City SFP would include members of the themed working groups and a smaller steering group to provide system-level coordination across these groups and to make sure that priorities are joined-up. This approach is recommended by Sustainable Food Places and has worked well in other areas. The steering group may also consider initiating an advisory and inclusion group.

The **working groups** are made up of experts and individual or organizational stakeholders. In many cases, these groups or networks already exist. The expert working groups would drive the direction and work of the city's SFP in each priority area. In some cases, working groups could be shared across the city and county e.g. Local and Sustainable Food Sourcing.

Working groups will be initiated by relevant steering group members and they should have autonomy in how they approach the work. For example, it may be that the activity within one theme is split and managed by two or more Working Groups (WGs), with the leads of each WG keeping each other informed and linking work together where necessary. We anticipate that all of the individuals and organisations involved in creating this action plan would have a role in at least one of the themed working groups.

The Food Secure and Financially Resilient Working Group will be based on a strategic relationship between the Nottingham City SFP and the Nottingham Financial Resilience Partnership (NFRP). This is important given the links between food security and financial resilience. Work to improve people's financial resilience in the city is led by the NFRP, which is the multi-sector partnership leading collaborative work on all aspects of preventing and tackling financial difficulty. Financial resilience work centres around the following core themes and associated issues:

- improving incomes
- reducing problem debt
- tackling high cost credit
- ensuring access to banking/financial products
- supporting saving
- improving financial education in schools and financial capability of adults
- supporting and linking across with affordable warmth work
- improving practice in emergency food provision (food banks)

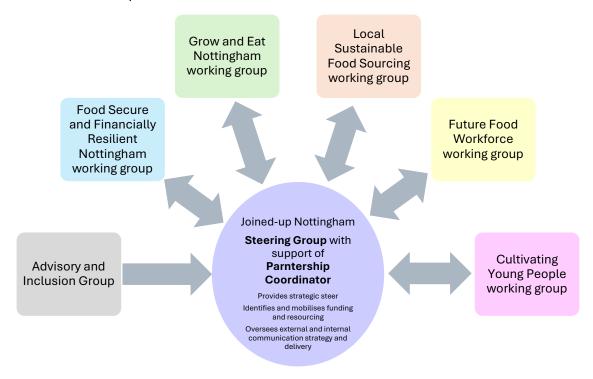
We anticipate that the *Food Secure and Financially Resilient Working Group* will be made up of two coordinated groups: (1) an operational food relief group continuing under the NFRP umbrella; and a separate (2) impact research group led by the University of Nottingham and NTU with the purpose of supporting evidence-based interventions to alleviate food poverty and insecurity in not only the short-term, but in the longer-term as well. A Notts City SFP steering group member, impact

research working group member or partnership coordinator will feed into the NFRP on food relief, financial education and income-related matters, e.g., by attending 'food relief group' meetings. Conversely, a member of the food relief group could feed into the Notts City SFP's impact research group. Details would be worked out in the terms of reference.

The **steering group** is smaller in membership but oversees strategic direction of the partnership. Its purpose is to coordinate the activity of the NCSFP, looking for synergies between working groups, supporting partnership building within and outside the NCSFP and fundraising. The coordinator would provide administrative support to coordinate communications and connections between working groups and support the work of the steering group, but would not get involved in the operational details at working group level.

Meanwhile, the role of the **advisory and inclusion group** would be to advise the steering group – when and as needed - on strategy, inclusion, citizen/community engagement and diversity.

Below is a visual representation of the structure:



5.2. Interim Steering Group

The steering group themes that emerged from the workshop included a strong suggestion to 'keep it small'. This was commonly articulated as a group of around eight to 12 people. It was suggested that the people put forward should be linked in with a relevant network. There should be a mix of strategic and operational perspectives with good local knowledge. The group should facilitate some access to resources e.g. administrative support and fundraising. We anticipate the first meeting of

the steering group will be in September. The first tasks of the steering group will be to agree the interim themes and actions, with set targets and timelines, co-draft the Terms of Reference, lead on setting up working groups as well as on the identification and prioritization of funding sources.

Member	Working themes	Quadruple helix representation	
FareShare Midlands	 Food Secure and Financially Resilient Nottingham Grow and Eat Nottingham Local and Sustainable Food Sourcing 	Community	
Himmah	 Food Secure and Financially Resilient Nottingham Grow and Eat Nottingham Cultivating Young People Local and Sustainable Food Sourcing 	Community	
Nottingham Growing Network	 Grow and Eat Nottingham Cultivating Young People Local and Sustainable Food Sourcing 	Community	
Nottingham Bid (to be confirmed)	Grow and Eat NottinghamLocal and Sustainable Food Sourcing	Business	
Nottingham City Council	 Food Secure and Financially Resilient Nottingham Grow and Eat Nottingham Cultivating Young People Local and Sustainable Food Sourcing 	Public	
Nottingham Financial Resilience Partnership, including the Food Bank Group	 Food Secure and Financially Resilient Nottingham Cultivating Young People 	Multi-sector	
Nottingham Social Eating Network	 Food Secure and Financially Resilient Nottingham Grow and Eat Nottingham Local and Sustainable Food Sourcing 	Academia/Community	
Nottingham Trent University	Food Secure and Financially Resilient Nottingham	Academia	

	 Grow and Eat Nottingham Local and Sustainable Food Sourcing Future Food Workforce 	
Urban Agriculture Consortium	Grow and Eat Nottingham Local and Sustainable Food Sourcing	Community
University of Nottingham's Food Systems Institute	 Grow and Eat Nottingham Local and Sustainable Procurement Future Food Workforce 	Academia
Trussell Trust Shared between Hope Nottingham, Clifton Food Bank and Bestwood and Bulwell Foodbank	 Food Secure and Financially Resilient Nottingham Grow and Eat Nottingham 	Community
Private sector to be confirmed		Business

5.3. Advisory and Inclusion Group Proposal

We envisage an advisory and inclusion group of experienced and expert individuals, who have been important to the Nottingham/Nottinghamshire food system at various times. These friends of the Nottingham City Sustainable Food Partnership can act as a sounding board for stakeholders and the steering group, advising on strategy, inclusion, diversity, community/citizen engagement and other related matters.

Member	Quadruple helix representation
East Midlands Combined County	Public (regional)
Authority	
Alex Flint, It's in Nottingham	Business
(Nottingham BID)	
Midlands Engine	Multi-sector
Nottingham City Trading	
Standards	
Nottinghamshire Sustainable	Multi-sector (County)
Food Network	

NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire County Integrated Care Board	Public (City-County)
Nottingham City Councillors	Public (City)
Research, Engagement and Consultation, Nottingham City Council	Public (City)
Nottingham City Children's Partnership	Multi-sector (City)
Nottingham Good Food Partnership	Community
Clive Foster, Executive Dean for EDI, Nottingham Trent University	Academia
Pathway Housing Solutions	Community
Tiger Projects CIC	Community
Katherine Linehan, Pro-Vice- Chancellor for People and Culture, University of Nottingham	Academia

5.4. Partnership Coordinator

According to Sustainable Food Places, member partnerships have found that a 'paid coordination function has been crucial to their success.' Coordinators are key to relationship building, partnership development, project management and supporting a strategic approach. Drawing on lessons from other partnerships in the SFP network, the coordinator's responsibilities generally include:

- Development of (or establishment of) a diverse cross-sector food partnership/ network.
- Development & support for governance structures; chair and/or partnership members.
- Development/oversight of/ consultation for collaborative strategy/action planning, involving multiple partners.
- Reporting to funders/ steering group/ on action plan progress.
- Identifying funding opportunities and/or bid writing
- Ensuring inclusion & diversity (could include use of SFP REDI Review Tool)
- Work specific to your place's priorities such as a mapping exercise; achieving or maintaining SFP awards; capacity building/ training for partners; developing resources; influencing local and/or national policy

- Management of projects led by food partnership, often taken from your food strategy or action plan e.g. development of specific network(s), a food charter, promotion of independent food businesses etc
- Facilitation e.g. of partnership (if no chair) and/or other meetings e.g., steering group, working groups
- Engagement e.g. to build membership, involvement, etc.
- Events in person and/or online (running or overseeing)
- Relationship building with stakeholders at all levels
- Comms (website/ social media/ newsletters) and/or campaigns.
- Engaging with Sustainable Food Places and other opportunities e.g. regional/national food networks and forums.
- Setting up and servicing of meetings
- Admin associated with events

Hence, the coordinator is not intended to fill in as an administrator or hired hand for one particular organisation or a handful of organisations within the partnership. The role exists to support the synergies between the partnership's *groups* and *members*. As an integral part of the interim action plan, funding of a partnership coordinator role will need to be explored and agreed by the Interim Steering Group.

5.5. Financing

The partnership will require a governance structure and funding, namely to employ a coordinator. There are a variety of different <u>SFP structures</u>. The majority of SFP coordinator funding in the UK comes from the public sector or from charitable trusts. In particular, many food partnerships are supported with funds from public health budgets. Coordinator functions that relate to furthering research can also be funded through universities.

As explained in the 'Stories from Sustainable Food Places' toolkit on 'Food Partnership Structures,' UK food partnerships are based on different types of governance and, by extension, funding models:

- 'Housed by a public sector organisation (e.g. public health, environment or economic development department of the local authority). These are funded or staffed by government employees.
- Housed by a third sector organisation (e.g. an environmental or community development organisation or charity). Funds are secured by the third sector organisation to support set up, running costs and staff.

• Fully independent: These are likely to have minimal resources and be staffed entirely by volunteers initially, but over time develop into fully fledged organisations, secure their own funds and employ their own staff to administer the partnership.

There are inevitably grey areas between these categories: partnerships housed by third sector organisations may be commissioned by the public sector; and partnerships that are fully independent with their own legal structure may still be based within the office of another third sector organisation. Partnerships will also cross over between categories during their lifetime; those that start out being housed by the third sector or public sector for example may later transition into fully independent partnerships. Partnerships may have been classified according to their current best fit, whilst accepting that this may not tell the whole story (p. 3).

A key next step will be to secure funding for the coordinator. This will be one of the first tasks of the Interim Steering Group.

6. Communications and Engagement

An interim action plan will also need to establish communications channels to maintain the flow of information and exchange between stakeholders, wider networks and communities. Communication methods may include a monthly/quarterly newsletter mailed out to members of the steering group, working groups and wider stakeholder networks; a webpage hosted by one of the partner organisations and social media presence (e.g., LinkedIn group). In addition, the support and endorsement of politically engaged champions will be important for enhancing legitimacy, political leverage and linkages to communities.

7. Interim Action Plan (December 2024 – December 2025)

The following table presents initial, first-year outputs and corresponding actions from December 2024 to December 2025 under each working group theme. The key policy drivers or levers have been mapped to each aim to demonstrate how a coordinated, multisector partnership could support the development and implementation of existing policies. Finally, it also suggests existing resources that can be mobilized, responsible parties and proposed deadlines. It will be for the steering group and working groups to consider these proposals, to refine them and/or agree alternatives. Working Groups (WGs) can also decide how they want to organise themselves. For example, it may be that the activity within one theme is split and managed by two or more Working Groups, with the leads of each WG keeping each other informed and linking work together where necessary.

We anticipate that some short-term actions may be completed in first 12 months, with Working Groups also developing medium (up to 5 years) and long-term (up to 10 years) aims, objectives and action plans during the first year. Each Working Group will need to identify the longer-term outcomes and targets it is working toward with respect to the Nottingham City SFP's vision and principles.

Working	Output	Action	Policy	Resources	Who	When
Group			levers/links			
Theme						
Secure and Financially Resilient Nottingham	identifying and building a bank of potential interventions that are	1.1. Firstly, take stock of the findings of local, national and international studies; current studies as well as knowledge and experience from Nottingham	and Moving for Good Health Nottingham Economic	, and the second	Theme working group lead	December 2025
	study. The output would be the development of a	practitioners. Secondly, prepare for a comprehensive, multiyear funding bid which supports identifying/designing interventions to food aid		and practice network Knowledge and experience of food aid providers in the city		

	funding bid that would benefit	and wider support that will		Nottingham City		
	_			Council: Data,		
	communities on the ground.	facilitate pathways out of		•		
	Strategic joining up between	food insecurity and poverty.		analysis and service		
	Nottingham City Sustainable	1. 2. Formalise dialogue and		provision		
	Food Partnership and	feedback mechanisms		Nottingham Financial		
	Nottingham Financial	between NCSFP and the		Resilience		
	Resilience Partnership for a	Nottingham Financial		Partnership, including		
	coordinated approach to	Resilience Partnership,		the 'Food Bank Group'		
	facilitating pathways out of	including the 'Food Bank		NI attiu ala ava alaina		
	food insecurity and poverty.	Group'		Nottinghamshire		
		4.0 Idambit. acceptant		Social Eating Network		
		1.3. Identify any short-term		Nottinghamshire and		
		emergency measures and		Nottingham		
		partnership resources that		Integrated Care Board		
		are required to support				
		organisations providing food		DWP; EMCCA;		
		relief.		Midlands Engine		
		1.4. Develop medium (up to				
		5 years) and long-term (up				
		to 10 years) aims, objectives				
		and action plans during the				
		first 12 months.				
	D''		NO. 5 .:		- .	
		2.1. Experiment with		,		December
	Nottingham to support future	,	and Moving for	_	J	2025
Nottingham		existing platform/s) for	Good Health	researchers	group lead	
		communicating and	Carbon	Urban Agriculture		
		matching opportunities for		consortium		
		supply distribution and	Nottingham			
		social prescribing				

		to 10 years) aims, objectives and action plans during the first 12 months.	2028 NCC Strategic Council Plan 2024-27 Refresh	Nottingham Growing Network, allotment associations Nottingham City Council Public Health; Leisure & Culture Service (Parks and Open Spaces) Food aid and social eating organisations Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Integrated Care Board		
-	·			•		December 2025
	• •	• •		teams at University of	•	. — •
_	/Nottinghamshire institutions			Nottingham,		
	•	· •		Nottingham Trent		
	procurement officers at those organisations.	county councils 3.2. Agree priorities for the development of local, sustainable food sourcing across the quadruple helix, based on existing policy commitments	NCC Procurement Strategy 2018- 2023 Strategic Delivery Plan	University, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council University of Nottingham/Nottingh am Trent University Researchers		

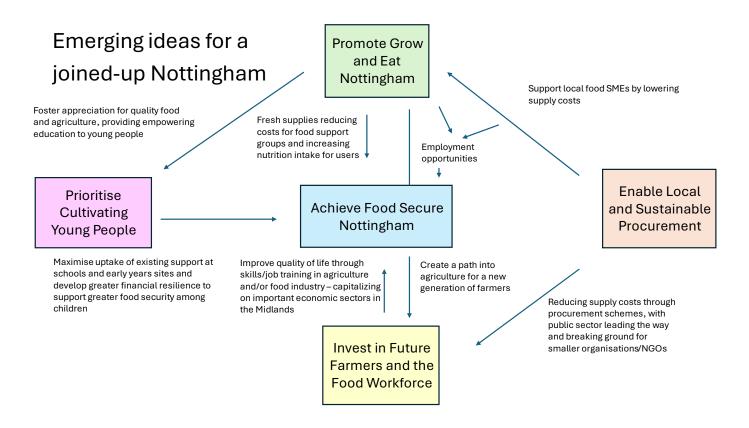
		I				
		3.3. Develop medium (up to	`	Local SMEs,		
				producers and		
		to 10 years) aims, objectives	policies)	wholesalers		
		and action plans during the	NTU	Urban Agriculture		
		first 12 months.		consortium; NFU and		
				other representative		
				bodies		
			associated	Doules		
			policies)	Sustainable Food		
			poddies)	Places Network		
			Nottinghamsh	(which have run		
			ire County	similar events)		
			Council	EMOOA 0		
			Sustainanie	EMCCA; Government		
			Procurement	Rural Development		
			Policy (2023	Fund		
			Midlands			
			Engine Food			
			White Paper			
4.	Joined up action plan	4.1. Co-design a pilot	Eating and	Healthy Schools Team	Theme	December
Cultivating	developed to expand work in	project based on knowledge	Moving for	Nottingham City	working	2025
Young	schools to excite children	and experience of	Kaood Health	Council Public Health	group lead	
People	about growing and food	pioneering teachers and		Council Public Health		
	provenance. The aim is to	schools; community groups	Carbon	Honeybee Farmacy		
	support healthy food choices	working with schools	Neutral	and other community		
	and potentially initiatives to	idelivering fedible	Nottingham	groups supporting		
	reduce consumption-based	Iclassrooms' and similar	2020-2028	children's learning		
	emissions.	initiatives, and Nottingham	ACTION Plan	around food		
		City Council's Healthy				

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		5.2 Develop medium (up to 5 years) and long-term (up to 10 years) aims, objectives and action plans during the first 12 months.	FarmStart Feasibility Study 2023	University of Nottingham; Nottingham Trent University Nottingham Further Education Institutions Representative organisations from the food and drink industry		
-	established, with Sustainable Food Places membership/accreditation achieved Develop medium (up to 5 years) and long-term (up to 10 years) aims, objectives and action plans during the first 12 months.	Nottingham City SFP interim steering group, finalise membership and agree terms of reference 6.2. Recruit and fund a partnership coordinator who has effective facilitator, negotiation and relationship-building skills 6.3. Support the establishment of the five themed working groups 6.4. Work toward the creation of a 'Nottingham	Council Plan 2024-2027 Refresh Nottingham's Plan for Economic Growth	Group Members Sustainable Food Places Toolkit	Interim Steering Group chairman and coordinator	6.1: September 2024 6.2: As soon as possible in 2025 6.3: October 2024 – July 2025 6.4: December 2025 6.5: December 2024

partnership and to unify all		6.6:
Nottingham City Council's		December
policies with a food		2025
dimension (with links to the		c 7
Government Food Strategy)		6.7.
C. F. Imamilians and a		December
6.5. Implement a		2025+
communications and		
engagement plan, as part of		
this interim action plan,		
including a partnership		
brand and strategies for		
engaging citizens across		
different working groups		
6.6. Agree an interim		
financial and fundraising		
plan, including possibility to		
leverage any EMCCA		
pipeline funding		
6.7. Apply for Sustainable		
Food Places accreditation		

Taking a whole systems view, each of the six aims are interlinking. The purpose of the partnership is to create the conditions and infrastructure to facilitate coordination and synergies *between* aims/working groups and *across* the partnership. The diagram below demonstrates how the proposed aims for a Nottingham City SFP could interact and impact one another.



Appendix 1

Moderate or severe food insecurity

9.3 million adults (17.7% of households) experienced food insecurity in January 2023 Percentage of households experiencing food insecurity*: 20.0% 18.0% 10.0% 10.0% 2.0% 2.0% 0.0% 10.0

Figure 1: Households experiencing food insecurity (Food Foundation 2023)

Appendix 2

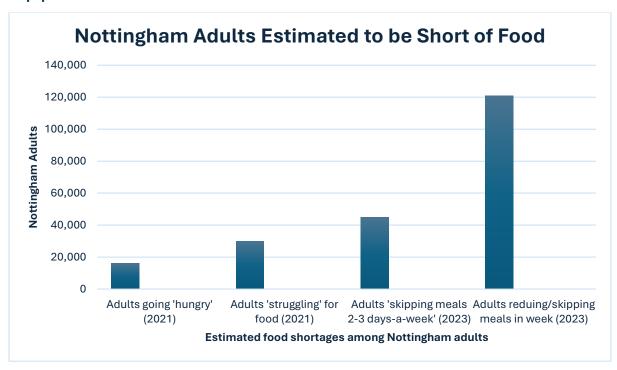


Figure 2: Nottingham food shortage: Modelled data (Blake and Whitworth 2021) and survey data (NFRP 2023)

Appendix 3

Low Financial Resilience in Nottingham					
Indicator	Nottingham	United Kingdom	Source		
Index Multiple Deprivation	11/317 authorities	-	ONS 2019: Index of Multiple Deprivation		
IMD Domain: Income	21/317 authorities	-	ONS 2021: Index of Multiple Deprivation		
Gross Weekly Pay (Full-Time)	£557.8	£642.2	ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2022		
Gross Disposable Household Income per head	£13,952 (2020)	£21,440 (2020)	ONS 2022 Regional gross disposable household income, UK: 1997 to 2020		
Residents with no qualifications	10.9%	6.6%	ONS Annual Population Survey 2021		
Numeracy Index	99 th Percentile (Higher number = poorer numeracy)		National Numeracy		
Monthly Private Sector Rent Rise – 2-bed 2020 to 2023	13%	12% (English LA average)	ONS/LGA		
Universal Credit	40,403	22,676 (English LA average)	DWP/LGA		
%Private Renters	28.6%	19% (England)			
Social Mobility	310/324 Local authorities (2016)	,	Social Mobility and Poverty Commission		

Data demonstrating low financial resilience in Nottingham

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