



Awards 2025

Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community

Institution Name	Nottingham Trent University
Submission title or project name	Getting School Ready
Nominee / key personnel	Nottingham Trent University (NTU) – Centre for Student and Community Engagement
URL	https://www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/the-centre-for-student-and-community-engagement/collective-impact/school-readiness
Submission	Taking a systems thinking approach, the Getting School Ready initiative seeks to tackle poor “school readiness” in a systemic way that involves the local community. Nottingham Trent University has used the convening power and neutral status of the institution to act as a backbone for a group of partners: a school, parents, the council and local services, who are all committed to addressing poor school readiness through improving the quality of their relationships. Families and professionals work together equitably and shape service delivery, which has created a better social ecosystem and improved outcomes. As a result, the school’s Ofsted rating has risen from “inadequate” to “good”; parental engagement has improved significantly, and a range of funding has been secured. It is a low-cost, replicable community engagement approach that helps to build a resilient and self-sustaining community.



Awards 2025

Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community

Institution Name	Cardiff University
Submission title or project name	Community Gateway, Grange Pavilion and Grange Pavilion Youth Forum: a decade of transformative partnerships
Nominee / key personnel	Community Gateway: Professor Mhairi McVicar; Corey Smith; Jenny Cater; Lynne Thomas; Rosie Cripps; Ali Abdi; Grange Pavilion CIO: Abdi Yusef (co-chair); Beth Gaffey (co-chair); Grange Pavilion Youth Forum: Nirushan Sudarsan; Shoruk Nekeb
URL	https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/community/our-local-community-projects/community-gateway
Submission	In 2023-24, Cardiff University's Community Gateway/Grange Pavilion partnership marked the Grange Pavilion's first full operational year following a decade of co-creating a £2 million redevelopment. Between 20 and 30 weekly well-being, education, enterprise and arts activities served thousands of residents through partnerships with more than 30 organisations, creating an estimated £25 million in social value. Community Gateway's Grangetown Careers and Role Model Week 2024 engaged more than 200 residents in collaboration with five regional higher education and further education institutions. CardiffUni@GrangePavilion delivered 30 interdisciplinary sessions with 90-plus university staff, while 15 students and 80 residents co-produced Love Grangetown partnership proposals. Participatory action research with the Grange Pavilion, Grange Pavilion Youth Forum and Cardiff Council influenced the city's approach to community engagement in planning. The Youth Forum, led by Grangetown-resident Cardiff students, reported over half its members studying at Cardiff University. Community Gateway/Grange Pavilion partnerships demonstrate how universities can act as transformative local anchors through long-term, equitable collaboration.



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Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community

Institution Name	University of Chichester
Submission title or project name	Adversity to University
Nominee / key personnel	Chris Smethurst (co-director of the Institute of Education and Social Sciences); Becky Edwards (senior lecturer in childhood, social work and social care); Sandra Lyndon (reader in childhood and social policy)
URL	https://www.chi.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/from-adversity-to-university/
Submission	Adversity to University is a unique and innovative widening participation initiative. It was developed by the University of Chichester to support individuals who have experienced marginalisation and/or disadvantage to access education and employment. The project works with local and national charities and community groups to mobilise the transformative potential of education to address societal inequality, change futures and support social mobility. Participants include those who have experienced homelessness and addiction, prisoners, refugees, care leavers and those who believed that the door to education was closed to them. Central to the project is initial outreach, a co-produced, 12-week bridging course, and ongoing support from lecturers and peer mentors, with progression into education or employment. Adversity to University has successfully provided life-changing opportunities for more than 250 students. The programme has received local and national recognition as a simple and effective solution to some of our most deeply rooted social challenges.



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Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community

Institution Name	King's College London
Submission title or project name	Living the London Living Wage
Nominee / key personnel	Doris Chauca (leader, Empoderando Familias, King's College London); Gina Rodriguez (leader, Empoderando Familias, King's); Dr Farhan Samanani (lecturer in social justice at King's); Hannah Gretton (lead organiser, Citizens UK); Michael Bennett (associate director – social mobility and widening participation, King's); King's for Change society, King's College London Student Union; Social Change Lab students; Dr Kirstie Hewlett (senior research fellow, King's Policy Institute); Johnny Runge (senior research fellow, King's Policy Institute); Marypaz Ventura-Arrieta, PhD candidate and research assistant, King's Policy Institute); Suzanne Hall (director of engagement, King's Policy Institute)
URL	https://www.kcl.ac.uk/impact/community-organising
Submission	King's College London, a Living Wage Employer since 2018, is championing the real London Living Wage through community organising and deep local engagement. Trust for London research shows that 600,000-plus Londoners earn below the threshold for a basic standard of living. In response, King's students, academics and local parent groups united in support of the "Make London a Living Wage City" campaign, led by Citizens UK and Trust for London. This initiative has helped lift many thousands of Londoners out of in-work poverty. Their efforts led to the accreditation of major South Bank employers – resulting in an estimated £4,700 annual pay rise per full-time employee. To evidence impact, the King's Policy Institute is working with Southwark Council and the Living Wage Foundation to build a case for wider adoption of the London Living Wage. King's received the Living Wage Foundation's "Institution" award for its leadership in promoting the London Living Wage.



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Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community

Institution Name	Teesside University
Submission title or project name	Kicking off Ramadan Football in Teesside
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	
Submission	Teesside University, in collaboration with the Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation (MFCF), harnessed the world's most popular sport to unite its local community and faith groups. Delivering free Ramadan Football Programme sessions, the university and MFCF empowered all members of the community to come together and engage in social sport after the breaking of the fast during Ramadan. In 2025, a diverse group of 205 participants between 16 and 59 years old and from a range of ethnicities and heritages took part in the Ramadan Football Programme sessions, which were delivered at the university's state-of-the-art facilities outside operating hours to allow those who were observing the holy period time to break fast and pray before playing. The programme also helped to break barriers, foster a sense of belonging and address heightened tensions across Middlesbrough after national social unrest caused damage to the university campus and nearby areas in summer 2024.



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Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community

Institution Name	Aston University
Submission title or project name	Villa Vision: a collaboration between Aston University, Aston Villa Foundation and Essilor Vision for Life
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	
Submission	Villa Vision stands proud testament to the power of higher education and to Aston University's commitment to – and achievement in – innovation, impact and community transformation. Through strategic and collaborative excellence, and focusing on addressing a critical health inequality, this pioneering initiative has made a transformational difference to the lives and futures of Birmingham's children. Poor eye healthcare can lead to poorer health, social and educational outcomes in children, and further drives health inequalities. Grounded in a series of listening events that identified barriers to eye health engagement, this creative and collaborative eye health initiative engaged almost 5,000 children (2023-24), united higher education, health and sport to achieve transformative community health and educational outcomes. It continues to provide long-term impact and opportunity across higher education and wider society.